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ABSTRACT

The decision-making processes of two major early childhood education organizations in New Zealand were examined in this study; specifically, decisions affecting the availability of preschool education services and the acceptability of these services. In light of events of the mid-1970s, a free kindergarten and a playcentre were examined in conjunction with the Department of Education's role in early childhood education. Organizational features and their environment were analyzed to describe the development of four key strategies and to evaluate follow-up implementation. In addition to observations, three surveys of families and staff of the two preschools were conducted to determine decision-making processes. Findings indicated that the strategic choices analyzed produced satisfactory outcomes for the majority of personnel within the two organizations. However, these outcomes seldom improved the availability and acceptability of the services to social groups not already using preschools. It was suggested that changing social conditions and the growth of other forms of early childhood education indicate that playcentres, free kindergartens, and the government need to consider whether they should maintain the prevailing pattern of provision. (BJD)

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IN NEW ZEALAND
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

by
ANNE MEADE

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ABBREVIATIONS

PC Journal	Playcentre Journal
NZPCF Ann. Rpt.	N.Z. Playcentre Federation Annual Report
NZPCF Ann. Conf. Mins.	N.Z. Playcentre Federation Annual Conference Minutes
NZPCF Nat. Exec. Mins.	N.Z. Playcentre Federation National Executive Minutes
Dom. Advisor's Rpt.	Dominion Advisor's Report
WPCA Ann. Rpt.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Annual Report
WPCA Council Mins.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Council Minutes
WPCA Exec. Mins.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Executive Minutes
WPCA Educ. Comm. Mins.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Education Committee Minutes
NZFKU Ann. Mtg. Mins.	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union Annual Meeting Minutes
NZFKU Conf. Rpt.	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union Conference Report
NZFKU Exec. Mins.	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union's Executive Minutes
NZFKU Submissions	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union's Submissions to the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education in New Zealand
WFKA Ann. Mtg. Rpt.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Annual Meeting Report
WFKA Ann. Mtg. Mins.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Annual Meeting Minutes
WFKA Council Mins.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Council Minutes
WFKA Exec. Mins.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Executive Minutes
Bailey Report	Report of the Consultative Committee on Pre-school Educational Services (1947)
Currie Report	Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand (1962)
Hill Report	Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education (1971)
NACPSE	National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education

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I would like to thank several colleagues who have contributed to this study reaching this stage: Dr Allan Levett for arousing my interest in voluntary organisations; Dr Geraldine McDonald and Dr David Barney for hours of stimulating discussion; Professor Jim Robb and Dr John Barrington, my thesis supervisors, for their advice and constructive criticisms; and Dr David Pearson and Mr Ilyn Richards for editorial comments in preparing this publication.

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Anne Meade

PLAYCENTRE AND FREE KINDERGARTEN ORGANISATIONS

In 1973 when I started this study, the economy looked healthy and the Labour Government was willing to implement policies recommended by the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education. The two 'recognised' pre-school organisations - free kindergarten and playcentre - spent the middle years of the 1970s trying to negotiate terms for the new Government grants that would suit their organisation's structure, ideology and methods of functioning. Decisions made outside the movements resulted in a grafting of new policies on to what already existed. It is these years and events which are described here.

In 1980, the economy is in recession and the social changes of the last decade are causing people to question assumptions, to examine the relevance of the structures of the existing organisations and to look carefully at ways of delivering services. There is an awareness that some social groups are able and willing to attend the services as they are at present. Data from my Wellington survey of pre-school families (Chapter 3) supplements the data in David Barney's book Who Gets to Pre-school? (1975) in showing that it is high and middle socio-economic status (SES) families who use centres. This study is primarily concerned with the decision-making processes that brought about and perpetuate the situation which favours pre-school attendance by children of these families. I believe that early childhood education services should be:

1. readily available to young families, and
2. flexible in their form and means of delivery to be acceptable to all parents of young children.

Early Childhood Education Services in New Zealand The field of early childhood education is large and complex. In New Zealand, there are a large number of voluntary organisations which play a major role in the provision of services. Most of the members of these organisations are women who have or have had children attending the service. Parents are both providers and consumers.

By way of illustration, a list of services and key organisations providing educational services to families with children aged 0-8 years is given below. This list should not be regarded as definitive. If a list of all the different types of workers were added, the figure would be far more complex as many services employ more than one type of worker.

FIGURE 1.1: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Services	Organisations
A UNDER DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OVERSIGHT	
- Free kindergarten	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union (NZFKU) and State, N.Z. Free Kindergarten Teachers Association (NZFKTA)
- Playcentres	N.Z. Playcentre Federation (NZPCF) and State
- Pre-school classes in primary schools	State
- Individual enrolments of pre-schoolers in primary schools	State
- Correspondence school pre-school programme	State
- Mobile kindergartens	YWCA, State and NZFKU
- Itinerant kindergarten teachers	NZFKU and State
- Junior classes in primary schools	State
- Junior classes in special schools	State
And to support these services (not exclusively) there are two main advisory groups:	
- Psychological Service	State
- Pre-school Advisory Service with Community pre-school workers	State
B UNDER DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE OVERSIGHT	
- Child care centres (many different types ranging from shoppers creches to full day care)	Some affiliated to N.Z. Association of Child Care Centres
- Special pre-school centres	N.Z. Society for the Intellectually Handicapped. N.Z. Crippled Children's Society
C OTHER	
- Playgroups	Many are unaffiliated. Some are visited by Community Pre-school Workers (State). Others are affiliated to a range of different organisations.
- Maori pre-schools	Maori Family Education Associations
- Hospital pre-school classes	Hospital Boards (some are in association with a Playcentre Association)
- Independent pre-schools	Attached to private schools

The range of early childhood education services is diverse. However, many of the services cater for only a small number of children - for example, in 1980 there were 30 pre-school classes attached to primary schools which, along with some individual pre-school enrolments in primary schools, catered for only 547 children. Also limiting the choice of services to parents are the costs of non-state services and likewise the hours of opening and/or the geographical location of the centre. The reality is that only a minority of parents have any choice, and they generally live in urban areas and have an above-average income. The choice for these parents is between playcentres, free kindergartens, private kindergartens, independent pre-schools or all-day child care centres. For other parents, the choice is between attending what is close-by and costs least, or non-attendance. To make the provision of early childhood education services more equitable is a complex task, I believe, cannot be achieved simply by giving more of the support to the two main pre-school movements. I shall return to this point later in this book.

Playcentres and free kindergartens in partnership with the Department of Education are generally not flexible enough to do what is necessary to meet the needs of a proportion of young families in New Zealand. One solution might be to establish more ad hoc organisations to cater for these families. Another is to establish integrated childhood services which might make services to young families more acceptable. Family health, welfare, care and education needs (which are all interrelated) would be met by a coordinated team of workers who are employed by the same authority, with plenty of community involvement fostered. Integrated childhood services are available in at least two states of Australia now (Olsson, 1978 and Wadsworth, 1979).

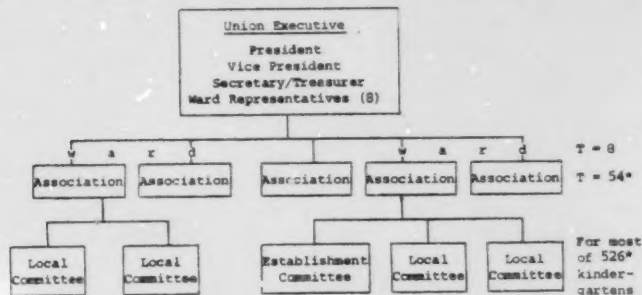
This study is concerned with what happened to two major early childhood education organisations in the mid-1970s. Mention of other services is made only when they directly impinged upon the decision-making processes of the playcentre and free kindergarten organisations. It should be noted that I did not study the effects of the programmes on the children's development. My current project involves descriptive case studies of six early childhood centres in one locality but again the focus is not on the benefit to the children. The underlying assumption of this research is that the children do benefit.

Before outlining the framework and methods used and reporting on data collected in the study a description of the struc-

ture of the free kindergarten and the playcentre movement will be useful.

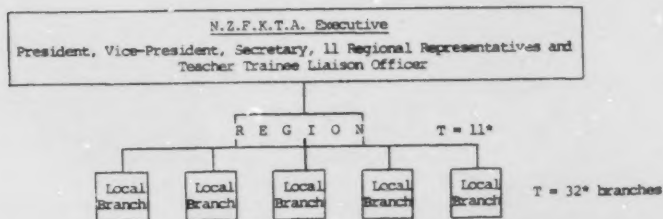
The Structure of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Movement The free kindergarten social system consists of four fairly distinct sub-systems. One is the voluntary organisation, New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union, concerned with establishing new kindergartens and administering existing kindergartens. It has a four-level hierarchy.

FIGURE 1.2: THE STRUCTURE OF THE KINDERGARTEN VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT



Another is the teachers' union (N.Z. Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association), which has a 3-level hierarchy. Its history is much shorter. The first salary rise negotiated by the NZFKTA was paid to kindergarten teachers in 1962.

FIGURE 1.3: THE STRUCTURE OF THE FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



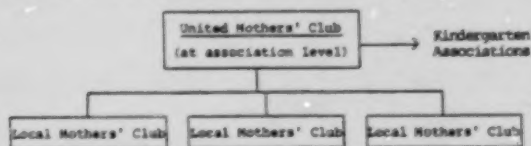
* In 1980

Note: On all the organisational charts, the lines linking boxes indicate lines of communication. The groups in boxes are formally recognised as having decision-making powers. Groups on the charts, not contained in boxes, only occasionally act as an intermediary.

The third, the kindergarten teacher training sub-system has now been integrated into the seven Teachers Colleges. From the early years of this century, kindergarten training centres have existed in the four main cities. During the early 1970s some kindergarten teachers were also trained at Palmerston North, Hamilton and North Shore Teachers Colleges. Since 1975, all trainees have received their training in the seven Teachers Colleges.

The fourth sub-system comprising the Mothers Clubs, is declining. In recent years, more of the core of women interested and able to involve themselves in kindergarten voluntary work have joined the committee. Other members have taken part-time jobs or joined different organisations.

FIGURE 1.4: THE STRUCTURE OF THE KINDERGARTEN MOTHERS' CLUB



These four sub-systems have come about through increasing differentiation of function over the years. There is now little overlap in membership and activities in the sub-systems.

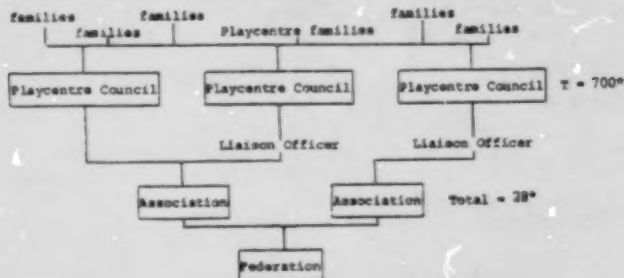
The Structure of the New Zealand Playcentre Movement When playcentre personnel draw a diagram to depict the organisation's structure, they put playcentre families as the core, with playcentres and support groups as surrounding layers.

FIGURE 1.5a: THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAYCENTRE MOVEMENT



Alternatively families are placed at the top of the hierarchy.

FIGURE 1.5b: THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAYCENTRE MOVEMENT



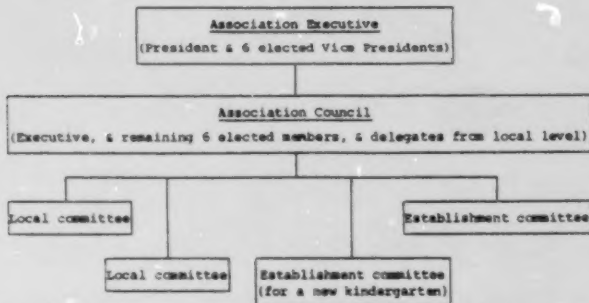
*These numbers are 1980 statistics

There is some specialisation of tasks within the playcentre social system, but often the same members do cross between one group and another. This means that specialisation is less clear-cut than in the kindergarten organisation however, because many playcentre members are involved in different activities at the same time or during the course of several years.

Much of the information in this study came from two Wellington associations, so I shall describe the structure of both these bodies before concluding the chapter with an outline of the book.

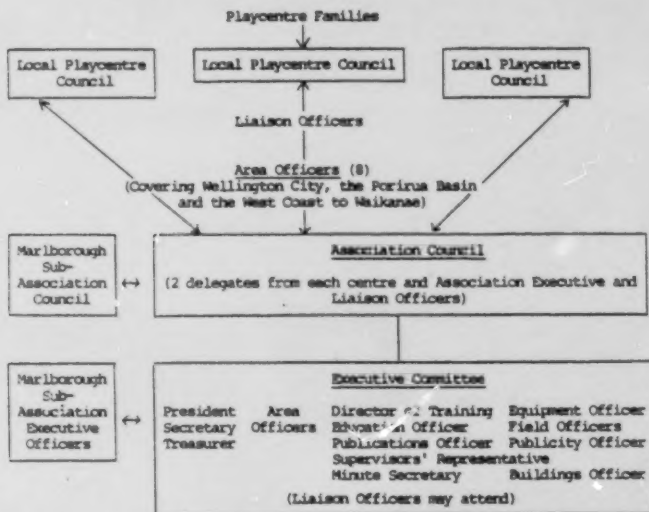
The Wellington Free Kindergarten Association The composition of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association Council is a mixture of twelve elected members voted in by the outgoing Council at each Annual General Meeting, and a delegate from each local committee and establishment committee in the Association, in addition to the President. The President and those six elected members who, in a second ballot, are elected as Vice Presidents constitute the Association Executive.

FIGURE 1.6: THE STRUCTURE OF THE WELLINGTON FREE KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION



The Wellington Playcentre Association The Playcentre Council has a similar federated structure with local councils sending representatives to Council meetings. However, there are far more officers with specialized functions who are also on the Wellington Playcentre Association Council. The Association depicts its structure thus:

FIGURE 1.7: THE STRUCTURE OF THE WELLINGTON PLAYCENTRE ASSOCIATION



Because of the focus on the Wellington pre-school scene, much of the information contained in this study cannot be generalized to the whole of New Zealand. The other main urban centres in New Zealand may have considerable similarities to Wellington, but it is recognised that the rural areas have greatly different characteristics and problems from those found in city suburbs.

The next chapter describes the theoretical framework and the methods used for examining the research problem. Chapter 3 examines the question of who gets to pre-school in Wellington, as well as looking at the characteristics of the staff and voluntary administrators of pre-school centres. Chapter 4 takes a look at the differences in programmes offered to children attending playcentres and kindergartens. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are concerned with decision-making processes. Chapter 5 looks at earlier decades and describes the main influences on the movements, and the patterns of interaction between the organisations and their environment, while Chapter 6 examines two important decisions made in the playcentre organisation in the mid-1970s. Chapter 7 is concerned with two recent decisions in the free kindergarten movement. A discussion of the patterns of decision-making and their consequences for the pre-school organisations and for families with young children is presented in Chapter 8, and some recommendations are made in the final Chapter.

RESEARCH PROBLEM, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

In this study, decision-making processes by the playcentre and free kindergarten voluntary organisations in conjunction with the Department of Education about providing pre-school education were examined.

The research problem was to analyse the organisational features of each organisation and its environment to describe the development of key strategies and then evaluate the consequences of their implementation for achieving greater availability and acceptability of the services to young families: staff and administrative volunteers' satisfaction; and later decisions.

Literature Most New Zealand research on early childhood education is reported in journals outside the mainstream of academic literature. An analysis of a bibliography of early childhood material (Meade, 1979) shows that just over half has been published. The two major publications which provide background material useful for understanding the origins and effects of the major decisions that were made during the mid-1970s are the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education (1971), commonly known as the Hill Report, and Barney's analyses of the availability of pre-school education in New Zealand in Who Gets to Pre-school? (1975).

The Hill report recommendations were the bases of the main decisions to change State funding arrangements for the two organisations. These recommendations were largely based on the Committee of Inquiry's deliberations on submissions from the main bodies involved in pre-school education. The new Government grants fall in two categories: direct grants - for example, grants for playcentre buildings - and indirect - for example, travel money for representatives to attend national coordination meetings.

Barney examined the family characteristics of those attending pre-school centres and the distribution of early childhood education services on a nation-wide basis with details about greater Auckland. I undertook a complementary smaller-scale survey of availability of pre-school places in the Wellington area in 1974 and obtained similar results about the under-representation of low SES families on pre-school rolls, and poorer provision in low SES suburbs. However, more Government grants to pre-school centres with 'special needs' and to some alternative pre-schools has redressed the balance of provision to a reasonable extent.

Papers with a more theoretical stance about New Zealand early

childhood education are less accessible to the general public. Geraldine McDonald's MA thesis (1969) investigated the inter-relationship between two playcentres and the mothers in the community, and she has written several more papers about the benefits that women gain through their involvement in the playcentre movement; the strongest statement being presented in "Educational Innovation : The Case of the New Zealand Playcentre" (1974). Barney too has written about the relationship between families and pre-school centres. In an unpublished paper "The Role of the State and the Voluntary Society in the Education of the Pre-school Child", he argues for a range of complementary (and cooperating) types of service from which a family can choose the facility which best fits its needs. There is growing pressure for State aid to child care centres so that they can be a viable alternative (economically and educationally).

Theoretical Framework When I began this research, I decided to treat each organisation as a case study. After reading Etzioni's (1960) critique of the goal-performance approach used for some earlier case studies of voluntary organisations (the best-known one being Sill's classic, *The Volunteers*, 1957), I settled upon an open-systems framework, which not only considers internal features of the organisation but also external influences.

The framework had to cope with dynamic processes in the voluntary organisations, with leaders' behaviour being conscious, intentional and influential, and with actions in the voluntary movements which were not rational and tidy. I believe that organisational features may constrain leaders' actions but they never directly cause change. People are responsible for new processes and reformed structures. These were my philosophic starting points that needed to be accommodated by a research framework and, with some minor adaptations, John Childs's (1972) model satisfied these criteria. He uses the term strategic choice to refer to the types of major decisions that are examined in this study.

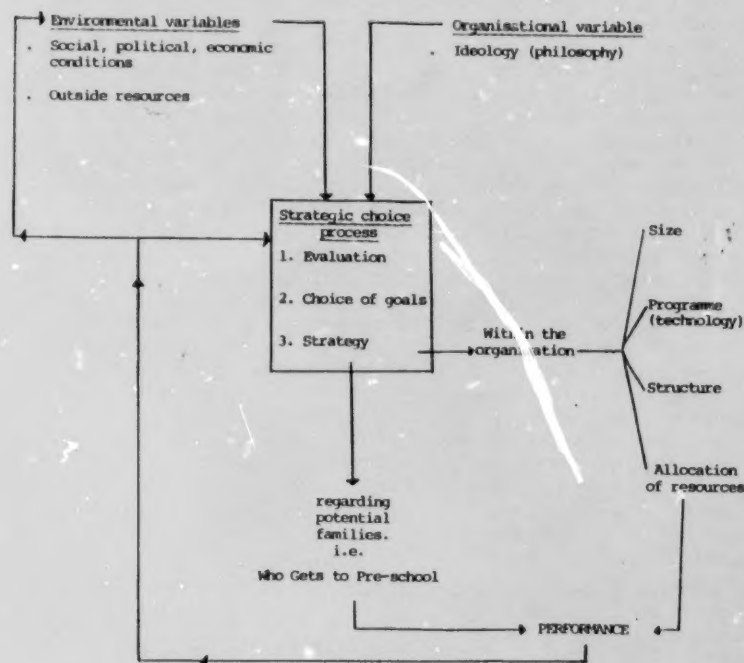
In the model the leaders are seen to have a degree of choice and it is the process of choosing longer-term policies that Child focusses upon. Three elements in the strategic choice process are named:

1. Evaluating constraints from the environment;
2. Thinking through goals and the means of achieving them;
3. Implementing the strategy; including mobilizing support for new policies.

If the strategy was not thought up by the leaders then additional elements are introduced into the process because collaboration is called for. The leaders' agreement must be obtained.

The main variables in Child's cyclical model are presented in the diagram below.

Figure 2.1: THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC CHOICE IN ORGANISATIONS



Social, political and economic conditions impinge on an organisation from outside it and the availability of outside resources (such as University Extension courses) can affect the running of the organisation. It already has a philosophy which helps it choose its goals. The leaders start evaluating, choosing new goals and the strategy to obtain them which will involve the size, programme and/or allocation of resources. This will result in a new situation which may start the whole cycle again.

Child argues that organisational leaders are able to choose between alternatives. An example would arise with a change in the number of people willing to work in early childhood centres or the size of an organisation. The point is that it is not a simple cause-effect process as decision-makers intervene and influence outcomes. Furthermore, different elements in the organisation are loosely connected, so that a decision to try and improve one element may affect other elements. Furthermore, chain effects are not always anticipated. For example, teachers could introduce a new type of programme involving sending home lots of children's books. Association leaders might agree to providing a grant for books, but fail to make accompanying changes to personnel numbers to run the scheme properly, so the home-book programme suffers. At this point a new strategic choice is required: to get the scheme going by neglecting other work; or by recruiting personnel; or to drop or modify the scheme. It is because of these chain effects that decision-making processes are open ended. Consequences that make people unhappy to work for the organisation, that make parents reluctant to send their children to the centres, or that work very inefficiently will usually cause leaders to choose new strategies.

Four strategic choice processes are described in this study - two for the playcentre organisation and two for the free kindergarten organisation. These examples of decision-making could have set me on a tread-mill of describing a poor performance in one area leading to decisions which upset performance on other areas thus leading to further decisions. However, my description of each decision-making process will finish after an evaluation of the first decision, without going on to subsequent ones. I will evaluate the success or otherwise of the decision by asking if the pre-school organisation became more effective in:

1. Providing a programme approaching the type and quality that user families want,
2. Providing it in a way that optimizes satisfaction for the staff and voluntary workers,
3. Providing the type of service that present non-users want (for example day care instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ day care),
4. Providing a relatively efficient service.

Research Methods Social scientists have not been successful in devising measures of educational effectiveness, nor can educational efficiency be measured the way a business can assess productivity and profitability. What methods were used, therefore,

to assess performance after examining four selected strategic choice processes?

'Participant observation' is the best way to gather information about how pre-school people make decisions about organisational size, programme, structure, allocation of resources and which groups of families to serve. This method allows a researcher to obtain a rounded view of life in the organisation. To check my observations, I compared my 500-page diary of observational records (of 70 playcentre and 50 kindergarten meetings plus 6 conferences and many related early childhood meetings) against minutes and reports kept as the organisations' records.

These two methods alone did not allow me to find out whether all SES groups of families got some pre-school education; nor whether the families that attended a pre-school centre and the staff and pre-school volunteers that ran the centres were in general agreement and reasonably happy about what was being done. For this reason I conducted three small surveys in Wellington - one of pre-school families, one of pre-school staff and one of volunteers (some national volunteers also answered this questionnaire). The survey data provided information about the characteristics of these people and their level of satisfaction, and why they felt the way they did. In order to understand the comments parents and staff made during these surveys, I spent many hours observing and participating in children's sessions (about sixty hours, and students whom I was tutoring did a further 120 hours in total) and in the kindergarten teacher and playcentre supervisors training programmes (the equivalent of at least a week in each case).

It is usual to use a variety of research methods in case studies, so the use of participant observation, personal and postal questionnaire surveys, and analysing the organisations' written material was typical. Nevertheless it was a large amount of work for one researcher and this is why the surveys had relatively small sample sizes.

The interviews with parents were all face-to-face and 138 interviews were completed in a range of suburbs in Wellington. Forty-five of these parents had children attending playcentre, 66 had children at kindergarten; and 27 parents were 'non-users'. These 27 were all in a middle SES suburb, most of whom wanted their child to attend a kindergarten but they had run up against long waiting lists. Sixty two staff were interviewed to obtain their characteristics and viewpoints; 39

were playcentre supervisors or assistants and 23 were kindergarten head-teachers or teachers. The sample of 162 pre-school volunteers was more complicated. Because I included national executive members as well as association (regional) and local volunteers, some of the questionnaires had to be sent by post. I chose to interview 46 randomly-selected volunteers personally. (Two refused, leaving 44).

The survey data was useful for evaluating organisational performance, as were many of the records kept by the organisations themselves. Their written records however were particularly valuable for finding out how the organisations had developed in the past and what habits had been formed in earlier years; and I intend briefly outlining the histories of both organisations' previous decision-making in Chapter 5, after reporting the main results of the three surveys in the next chapter and describing the differences in the children's programmes in Chapter 4.

THE SURVEYS

Three surveys of people connected with the two pre-school organisations - the playcentre and free kindergarten movements - were conducted. These were to provide information that would complement the observational material on decision-making processes. The main results of these surveys are reported in same order as they were done. To set the Pre-school Families Survey data in context here is an analysis of how pre-school places in Wellington are provided. It should be noted that the Pre-school Families Survey and the Pre-school Staff Survey were done only in Wellington.

Provision of Pre-school Places in Wellington A comparison of pre-school places (roll numbers) and the population of 3 and 4 year olds in different SES areas in Wellington indicates that there are fewer places for children living in low SES suburbs relative to those living in high SES areas. Despite this, there has been little organised pressure from parents for an increased number of places in inner-city, lower SES suburbs. The improved ratio between 1974 and 1980 is a result of a greater decline in young children in the inner city in comparison with the suburbs.

TABLE 3.1: RATIO OF PRE-SCHOOL PLACES TO POPULATION OF 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS BY SES AREAS OF WELLINGTON CITY

	<u>1974</u>		<u>1980</u>	
	# of 3 and 4		# of 3 and 4	
	Places : year olds*		Places : year olds**	
Upper SES Areas	1	: 1.7	1	: 1.6
Upper-middle SES Areas	1	: 2.6	1	: 2.1
Lower-middle SES Areas	1	: 2.8	1	: 2.1
Lower SES Areas	1	: 4.2	1	: 2.9
Total	1	: 2.9	1	: 2.1

* 1971 Census

** 1976 Census

The different distributions of playcentre and free kindergarten places in Wellington presents an interesting picture. In 1974, in the upper SES areas playcentres catered for considerably more children than the kindergartens. By 1980, with the opening of three new kindergartens in these areas, this is no longer the case. Now, kindergartens cater for far more children than do playcentres in all areas.

TABLE 3.2: DISTRIBUTION OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES AND ROLL NUMBERS BY SES AREA IN WELLINGTON CITY (1980)

	Playcentres	No.	Roll	Kindergartens	No.	Roll
Upper Ses Areas	Cashmere			Churton Park		
	Karori			Karori		
	Karori West			Khandallah		
	Kelburn	5	154	Onslow	5	350
	Wadestown			Wadestown		
Upper-middle SES Areas	Ngaio			Hataitai		
	Roseneath	3	74	Ngaio	3	202
	Wilton			Seatoun		
Lower-middle SES Areas	Brooklyn			Berhampore		
	Houghton Valley			Brooklyn		
	Island Bay			Island Bay		
	Johnsonville			Johnsonville		
	Kilbirnie	6	190	Johnsonville West	13	930
	Newlands			Lyall Bay		
				Miramar		
				Miramar North		
				Newlands		
				Newlands Park		
				Northland		
				Strathmore		
				Paparangi		

	Playcentres	No.	Roll	Kindergartens	No.	Roll
Lower SES Areas	Newtown			Clyde Quay		
	Wellington Central	2	41	Wellington South	3	168
		16	459		24	1650

In 1980, the proportion of playcentre places for children aged 3 and 4 years still drops off dramatically in low SES areas, whereas the proportion of kindergarten places only declines slightly in comparison.

TABLE 3.3: RATIO OF PRE-SCHOOL PLACES IN 1974 AND 1980 TO POPULATION OF 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS BY SES AREAS OF WELLINGTON CITY

		Playcentre		Kindergarten		Total	
		Place : Population		Place : Population		Place : Population	
Upper SES Areas	1974*	1	: 2.9	1	: 4.2	1	: 1.7
	1980**	1	: 5.1	1	: 2.3	1	: 1.6
Upper-middle SES Areas	1974	1	: 7.1	1	: 4.1	1	: 2.6
	1980	1	: 8.0	1	: 2.9	1	: 2.1
Lower-middle SES Areas	1974	1	: 10.5	1	: 3.8	1	: 2.8
	1980	1	: 12.3	1	: 2.5	1	: 2.1
Lower SES Areas	1974	1	: 15.0	1	: 6.0	1	: 4.2
	1980	1	: 14.8	1	: 3.6	1	: 2.9
Totals:	1974	1	: 7.7	1	: 4.1	1	: 2.7
	1980	1	: 9.4	1	: 2.6	1	: 2.1

* Related to 1971 Census

** Related to 1976 Census

It can be seen that only one third (it was one quarter in 1974) of the children living in low SES suburbs are attending a pre-school centre compared with more than half of the 3 and 4 year olds living in middle and high SES suburbs. Children from the latter type of suburbs are more likely to use the option of private kindergartens so probably 75 percent or more of these children are users. Despite this, demand for an increased number

of kindergarten places has been mostly in high SES suburbs in recent years - in Khandallah, Ngaio and Wadestown.

Pre-School Families Survey A small sub-sample of 27 non-users* from a middle SES suburb was included in the survey of pre-school families. Most of this group (86 percent) said they would have liked to have used playcentre or kindergarten. This is in line with the socio-economic status of the fathers of these non-user children. They tended to be in professional/managerial occupations, and this study, as well as Barney's (1975), showed that the higher the father's SES, the greater the likelihood of pre-school use. Because of this, the factors related to non-use in this suburb may be different from influential factors in rural areas or low SES areas.

The mobility (moving around the world or New Zealand) of these families left many 3 and 4 year olds without pre-school education. The recent arrivals did not know about the full range of pre-school services in the suburb. If they knew about playcentre, they generally decided against it by:

- (i) trying it, and finding they or the child did not feel happy there. It was then too late to enroll at kindergartens; or
- (ii) hearing about it by talking to neighbours and deciding that playcentre was 'not organised enough'.

If they knew about the kindergarten, they were thwarted in their attempts to use the service, as long waiting lists meant late enrolments and transfers could not be accepted. In Wellington, parents seldom transport their children to other suburbs in the way Barney (1975) reports happens in Auckland.

Half the non-users said they never walked to the vicinity of the shopping centre where the pre-school centres were situated. Only 15 percent of the users never walked, and yet they averaged the same distance between home and the centres. Non-user mothers had the use of a car less often than mothers of pre-school attenders. No car and a reluctance to walk means getting to and from a pre-school centre becomes a problem. I believe that this is likely to be a problem common to non-users in all types of areas - rural or urban. Car pools can help, but parents seldom utilize these until after they have begun attend-

* Families who were not attending nor on the waiting list of the playcentres and kindergartens in the area.

ing. The recent innovations of mobile pre-school units and community pre-school workers supporting playgroups in family homes have been useful ways to overcome transport difficulties for some families.

Only four non-users did not want to use playcentre or kindergarten. One father said they just had not considered pre-school education, whereas the other three families had made a deliberate decision not to have their children attend organised gatherings until they began school.

It would seem that most parents of children aged 3 and 4 years in New Zealand want some pre-school education for their off-spring. This is particularly true of families classified as having a high or medium SES ranking. My survey, like Barney's (1975) found that amongst families using pre-school centres there was an under-representation of families with fathers' occupations in SES levels 5 and 6 (Elley and Irving, 1972) using pre-school centres in comparison with the proportions of Wellington males in SES levels 5 and 6.

TABLE 3.4: PRE-SCHOOL FATHERS' OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

	Total Users		Wellington Male Labour Force
		%	%
SES Level 1	22	20.8	7.3
SES Level 2	36	34.0	16.2
SES Level 3	19	17.9	18.6
SES Level 4	18	17.0	28.1
SES Level 5	10	9.4	20.1
SES Level 6	1	0.9	9.7
	106*	100.0	100.0

* Five interviewees were solo mothers

Playcentre and Free Kindergarten Families Those who attended pre-school centres were very much in favour of the benefits of formal early childhood education, although they felt that what playcentre and free kindergartens had to offer did differ. When answering the open-ended question 'Why did you choose playcentre/ kindergarten?', many parents volunteered the information that they wished the pre-school service to reinforce their child-rearing practices. They perceived a difference in playcentre and

kindergarten children's sessions. Parents who believe that children should do as they are told seemed to like kindergarten:

"I don't like the way my neighbours who use playcentre raise their children - the children are not controlled at home and I've heard they are not at playcentre. The children don't have to do as they are told".

Parents who believe in more freedom for their children and the chance to learn self-direction seemed to like playcentre:

"I like playcentre. Kindergarten is too like school. Playcentre has more adults to help the children".

Some parents were critical of kindergarten teachers' handling of children, but a greater proportion were critical of playcentre discipline.

Sixty-five families had used playcentre at some stage and their reasons for choosing playcentre are listed below.

TABLE 3.5: PARENTS REASONS FOR PREFERRING PLAYCENTRE

		8
Reasons related to child-rearing philosophy	Like parent involvement	27.0
	Want less formal programme	4.5
Other	Younger entry	42.0
	Couldn't enrol at kindy	15.0
	Child's social benefit	6.0
	Referred	3.0
	Nearest	1.5
		99.0

Eighty-four families had used kindergarten at some stage and the reasons for their choice are listed below.

TABLE 3.6: PARENTS REASONS FOR PREFERRING KINDERGARTEN

		8
Reasons related to child-rearing philosophy	"More organised - more disciplined"	36.0
Other	Social benefits to child	18.0
	Better equipment and activities	14.0
	Nearest	12.0
	Referred	9.5
	Other	11.0
		100.5

There were 28 families who admitted having used playcentres and free kindergartens (at different times). Twenty-one of these families had made kindergarten their first choice, but had used playcentre for a while because children could start younger. The other seven families had changed services because either an older sibling, the present pre-schooler or the mother had not been happy at playcentre. Two of the families had withdrawn a child from kindergarten because it had not settled happily there.

Apart from tending to hold different ideas about disciplining children, what were the distinguishing characteristics of playcentre and free kindergarten families? Differences between the two groups of families were related to the SES of the families and to their geographic mobility. The difference between playcentre and kindergarten families' SES was not statistically significant, but there were greater proportions of higher SES families attending playcentre (62 percent of the playcentre samples were in levels 1 and 2, compared with 49 percent of the kindergarten sample). I believe that the difference would have been greater, if participation in other voluntary organisations and sports clubs had not drawn many very active 'joiners' away from the playcentre organisation. In the author's view, the 'joiners' used kindergarten (as did 'non-joiners') because there is less obligatory involvement in kindergarten, although none explicitly said so.

TABLE 3.7: PARENTS' SOCIAL PARTICIPATION SCORE BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

Score on Chapin Scale	Playcentre		Kinder-garten		Total	
	%		%		%	
0 - 8	13	28.9	23	34.8	36	32.4
9 - 20	27	60.0	25	37.9	52	46.8
21 - 35	5	11.1	18	27.3	23	20.7
	45	100.0	66	100.0	111	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 6.46; \text{ df} = 2; p < 0.05.$$

As could be expected from other social participation studies, it was families in high SES suburbs who were very involved in some or several voluntary organisations. In low SES suburbs, parents are less likely to have the education or family socialisation that is associated with voluntary organisation participation, so there is a recurring pattern of struggling committees in such areas. Special efforts are needed in low SES areas to get mothers and children along initially, because of the obligatory parent involvement in playcentres; and, in addition, a playcentre has to motivate some members to train as supervisors. Once involved, parents in these areas enjoy playcentre greatly, if the high adult attendance rate can be taken as an indicator of enjoyment.

A majority, 52 percent, of non-users had low social participation scores, despite their relatively high family SES, which could indicate that the non-use could be related to lack of social participation skills (or lack of confidence). Alternatively, the low social participation scores could reflect the geographic mobility of the non-users.

Recent geographic mobility and intended mobility was far more common amongst playcentre than kindergarten users. This factor was a dominant influence on the choice between the two types of pre-school education.

TABLE 3.8: PARENTS' YEARS IN THE SUBURB BY PRE-SCHOOL
AFFILIATION

	Playcentre		Kinder- garten		Total	
		%		%		%
Less than 2 years	17	37.8	12	18.2	29	26.0
2 to 5 years	15	33.3	16	24.2	31	27.9
More than 5 years	13	28.9	38	57.6	51	45.9
	45	100.0	66	100.0	111	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 9.52; \text{ df} = 2; p < 0.01.$$

Kindergarten users were more settled - far fewer had moved to their present house in the last 2 years (18 percent, compared with 38 percent of playcentre users); and far more had been in the same suburb for 5 or more years (58 percent, compared with 29 percent of the playcentre families in the sample). There was also a tendency for kindergarten families to feel more settled for the future than playcentre users.

Related to their mobility around New Zealand was the lack of contact between playcentre families and their extended families. I was astonished to find that 82 percent of the playcentre sample saw their parents or in-laws infrequently (less than once per month), or never. A large, but considerably lower, proportion (53 percent) of kindergarten families visited the children's grandparents seldom. When Miriam Gilson (1969) did her family survey she found relatively strong ties with kin, so Wellington families seem to have experienced a lessening of physical ties in the 7 year period between the surveys.

It was not surprising therefore to find that playcentre families do things for each other in ways usually found amongst extended family members. To provide just one example, one playcentre mother, involved in a car crash, was provided with baking, house keeping help and transport to out-patients clinics by a roster of playcentre parents in the weeks following the accident.

Playcentre families in the sample got help from friends for day-time child-minding far more frequently than did kindergarten families. This is another aspect of the 'family' nature of playcentre. Probably because the children attend playcentre for a fewer number of hours per week (6-9 hours on average in city areas), playcentre families share child care with other families

more than kindergarten families do. Children can attend kindergarten 15 hours per week once they are in the morning group.

However, despite the mobility of playcentre families, the network of acquaintances and friends seemed to exist before they enrolled at the pre-school centre. Seventy-one percent of playcentre families were personally introduced to playcentre by friends and neighbours, compared with 55 percent of kindergarten families enrolling after a personal introduction. Noticing the pre-school centre, reading some publicity releases or being referred by, say, a medical person were the other main introductions to playcentres and kindergartens.

Reference was made to the longer opening hours of kindergartens. The higher proportion of kindergarten mothers who were in paid employment was no doubt associated with this feature of the service. Forty-two percent of the kindergarten mothers had paid employment and a quarter of these worked full-time. Only one playcentre mother had a full-time job, but 33 percent of the playcentre sample did have part-time paid employment. I would predict that these proportions will have risen since this survey was conducted in 1974 in line with national women-in-employment trends. Playcentre personnel tell that in some centres now, working mothers are paying other mothers to do their parent helping for them, thus ensuring that a sufficient number of adults help during playcentre sessions. I feel that greater benefits would be gained if employers gave parents a half-a-day off work once per month * to help in their child's pre-school centre.

A recent survey on parent helping in playcentres (McDonald, forthcoming) found that only 16.5 percent of these parents would change to another type of pre-school if there was one close-by which had no parent helping. It can be assumed that the remaining 83.5 percent were neutral or gained satisfaction from parent helping. The staff also enjoyed having parents involved in the centre. Their main sources of satisfaction are discussed in the next section of this chapter about the Pre-school Staff Survey.

* The Parent-helper Project (McDonald, forthcoming) found that the modal group for parent-helping was once per month.

Pre-school Staff Survey In 1974-75 a small-scale survey of 62 playcentre and free kindergarten staff members (39 & 23 respectively) in the Wellington associations was conducted. The motivation to take on pre-school work, the length of experience of the staff in this type of work and the reasons for leaving add up to a picture in which we see playcentre supervisors having an entirely different attitude to their work to kindergarten teachers.

Mothers who undertake playcentre training courses often do so without any intention of supervising, then find themselves being persuaded that their services as supervisors are needed. This happened to 69 percent of the sample, whilst the others trained because they wanted to supervise although they knew it could never be a career. Equal proportions (35 percent) of kindergarten staff chose this work as a career because they wanted to work with children, or because they had earlier connections with kindergartens (e.g. their mother had been a pre-school volunteer) and liked the work. Kindergarten teachers are career-minded. Several of the sample teachers had returned after raising their own family, but playcentre supervisors * do this work whilst their children are young. With smaller families, the period of involvement in playcentre supervising may be quite short, as can be seen from the survey results.

TABLE 3.9: STAFF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Playcentre		Kinder- garten		Total	
	%		%		%	
Less than 2 years	28	71.8	6	26.1	34	54.8
2 - 9 years	11	28.2	13	56.5	24	38.7
10+ years	-	-	4	17.4	4	6.5
	39	100.0	23	100.0	62	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 10.43; \text{ df} = 2; p < 0.01.$$

Playcentre Supervisors* and Assistants also intended to leave their positions after a relatively short time. Their reasons included: children starting school (21 percent) another trainee needing experience (21 percent), pregnancy (18 per-

* Supervisors with a capital S refers to the head Supervisor.

cent), taking up paid employment (18 percent). The playcentre staff were not leaving because of dissatisfaction with the work, it was simply the normal thing to do as the children grew older. Of the seven kindergarten teachers who were leaving soon, only two were critical of the kindergarten service - it paid poorly (a long-awaited salary-increase was granted later in 1975) and work conditions meant ideals could not be fulfilled.

There were remarkable similarities in the feelings of satisfaction expressed by both playcentre and kindergarten staff.

TABLE 3.10: JOB SATISFACTION FELT BY STAFF BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Playcentre		Kindergarten		Total	
		%		%		%
Very high	11	28.2	8	34.8	19	30.7
High	21	53.9	11	47.8	32	51.6
Moderate	7	18.0	4	17.4	11	17.7
	39	100.1	23	100.0	62	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 0.30; \text{ df} = 2; p > 0.1.$$

The work with children was the main satisfaction for over 60 percent of both playcentre and kindergarten staff, but the satisfaction gained from working with other adults (particularly parents) was important for about a quarter of both types of staff. Sixty-five percent of the staff said they felt a strong commitment to their work, but 'family' was named as their main life interest by all playcentre staff and ten kindergarten teachers.

The staff were asked which aspects of their work were most important to them. For kindergarten teachers, a happy relationship with the other staff ranked highest and good physical working conditions ranked second. For playcentre staff, by far the most important consideration was the fact that playcentre work could be combined with family responsibilities, and a harmonious relationship with the others on the supervising team was ranked second.

The survey gave staff the opportunity to suggest changes to the ways playcentres and kindergartens are administered. Most playcentre staff said that playcentre administration should not

be changed structually but they would like closer links with administrators and more men involved in playcentre activities. Administrative changes were, however, desired by kindergarten staff. Twenty-seven percent wanted the Department of Education to take over kindergarten administration. The same proportion wanted to have a greater say in the running of kindergartens themselves. In sepcifying how Government could assist local pre-school centres more:

- kindergarten teachers asked most frequently for finance for equipping and running kindergartens (a sessional grant was approved later that year), and for paying staff (an increased salary was also approved soon after);
- playcentre supervisors asked most frequently for financial help towards sites and buildings (sites and buildings grants were being finally negotiated about that time).

It is interesting to note that the ways that staff members would like Government to assist pre-school centres were partly at variance with the views of pre-school volunteers. Staff views seem to have been heeded. Therefore, they may have felt reasonable satisfaction with some of the top level strategic choices made during the mid-1970s whereas many volunteers were not so happy.

Pre-school Volunteers Survey This was the last survey, chronologically, to be conducted. The main reason for this survey of 162 volunteers was to find out the characteristics of the people who shaped the four strategic choices (discussed in Chapters 6 and 7), and guided their implementation. Their satisfactions and frustrations were also recorded to assist with the evaluation of strategies.

Playcentre volunteers tended to be younger than kindergarten volunteers; and younger than volunteers in other organisations, generally speaking. The co-operative nature of the movement draws in parents while they are relatively young. As might be expected, playcentre volunteers tended to have younger families. In both movements the same proportion had at least one pre-school child (74 percent) however, the playcentre organisation had far more committee members who had all their children under 5 years old.

There was a significantly greater proportion of men on kindergarten committees (59 percent compared with 12 percent male playcentre volunteers) and the men tended to be more involved at local and association levels rather than at national

level.

TABLE 3.11: VOLUNTEERS' SEX BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Playcentre		Kindergarten		Total	
	%		%		%	
Male	10	11.5	44	58.6	54	33.3
Female	77	88.5	31	41.0	108	66.6
	87	100.0	75	99.6	162	99.9

$$\chi^2 = 42.54; \text{ df} = 1; p < 0.01.$$

I felt that many kindergarten decisions were influenced by the men valuing 'good business practices' and productivity, whereas the women in the playcentre movement valued processes which enable children and their parents to learn together.

Less than 50 percent of the female kindergarten and playcentre volunteers had paid employment; and female SES ranking of earlier employment was the same for both organisations. When a comparison was made of male SES ranking in the households of volunteers, it was found that kindergarten volunteers' family SES ranking was higher (although not significantly) than ordinary kindergarten families; but that the playcentre volunteers' family SES rankings matched the ordinary playcentre families' SES rankings. Most of the playcentre volunteers were in the above average income bracket of \$6000 - \$9999 in 1975, whereas kindergarten volunteers had a more scattered range of incomes. There was a strong bias, for both groups of volunteers towards having incomes higher than ordinary parents - more than could be expected from inflation in the year between the surveys. (Male average income rose by 14 percent in that period).

TABLE 3.12: MALE INCOME BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Playcentre				Kindergarten			
	Parents		Volunteers		Parents		Volunteers	
		%		%		%		%
\$ 0 - \$2999	-	-	1	1.2	-	-	1	1.4
\$3000 - \$5999	12	26.7	8	9.5	25	37.9	10	13.5
\$6000 - \$9999	23	51.1	46	54.8	28	42.4	32	43.2
\$10,000 +	7	15.6	27	32.1	9	13.6	30	40.5
Don't know	3	6.7	2	2.4	4	6.1	1	1.4
	45	100.1	84	100.0	66	100.0	74	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 10.61$$

$$df = 4$$

$$p < 0.05$$

$$\chi^2 = 20.41$$

$$df = 4$$

$$p < 0.001$$

This income gave most volunteers the resources to participate in voluntary work; for example, 78 percent of them always had the use of a car.

Volunteers tended to have had more schooling than had the pre-school parents in the earlier survey; and the proportions who had had university education far exceeded the New Zealand average. Such levels of schooling are usually associated with high SES occupations which in turn are associated with high voluntary organisation participation, so it came as no surprise to find that the pre-school volunteers were active 'joiners' of committees. Their social participation scores on the Chapin scale (1970) were considerably higher than ordinary families.

TABLE 3.13: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

Chapin Score	Playcentre				Kindergarten			
	Parents		Volunteers		Parents		Volunteers	
	%		%		%		%	
0 - 8	13	28.9	5	6.0	23	34.8	1	1.4
9 - 19	27	60.0	35	41.7	25	37.9	31	43.1
20 +	5	11.1	44	52.4	18	27.3	40	55.6
	45	100.0	84	100.0	66	100.0	72	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 26.4$$

$$df = 2$$

$$p < 0.001$$

$$\chi^2 = 28.95$$

$$df = 2$$

$$p < 0.001$$

Generally, pre-school volunteers had the background characteristics usually associated with voluntary work, but what motivated the volunteers to work for the pre-school movements in particular, and what happened to ensure their continued participation? The majority (53 percent) said they wanted primarily to be involved in their own children's pre-school education; this was true of both playcentre and kindergarten volunteers. Following the pattern of the more personal way the playcentre organisation functions, there was a higher proportion (22 percent) of playcentre volunteers who joined to meet others, than was found in the kindergarten sample (3 percent). 'Doing something' for the pre-school centre was an important motivator for 15 percent of the kindergarten volunteers, but mentioned by only 6 percent of the playcentre sample. Other reasons for joining included: helping in the community, and simply accepting an invitation to join without any other motivation.

An interesting indicator of the style of functioning for each organisation was the way in which people first came to join a pre-school committee. A large majority of playcentre volunteers (75 percent) joined the committee via a personal approach, whereas the majority of kindergarten volunteers (51 percent) volunteered or found all in attendance at the Annual General Meeting were voted onto the committee - a less personal mechanism. Pre-school volunteers, on the whole, tend not to serve on these committees for more than 2-3 years. Fifty-two percent of the sample had been on a pre-school committee for less than two years, and 44 percent were intending to resign

in less than two years after the interview; the resignations mostly occurring once their children were attending school.

However, more of those on association and national committees said they would remain a pre-school volunteer for more than 5 years; 62 percent of the national sample indicated this, compared with 16 percent of the local volunteers. The longer the person remained on a pre-school committee, the more likely it was that he or she would move onto association and national level committees, and the greater was the satisfaction felt.

TABLE 3.14: VOLUNTEERS' LEVEL OF SATISFACTION BY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

	Local		Association		National		Total	
	%		%		%		%	
Very high	26	24.5	13	46.4	16	64.0	55	34.6
High	52	49.1	9	32.1	8	32.0	69	43.4
Moderate	25	23.6	5	17.9	1	4.0	31	19.5
Low	3	2.8	1	3.6	-	-	4	2.5
	106	100.0	28	100.0	25	100.0	159	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 17.88; \text{ df} = 6; p < 0.05.$$

Not unexpectedly then, it was found that playcentre volunteers tended to have larger families than the playcentre families interviewed in the earlier survey. With smaller families, the shortening of the period of attendance may well create problems for some committees, it being difficult to retain a core of experienced members, because commitment to the organisation grew the longer a parent had children attending a playcentre or kindergarten.

Playcentre volunteers held a wider range of positions (57 percent held two or more positions) than did kindergarten volunteers (31 percent) because there were more positions and members were encouraged to diversify their activities. This may be one factor associated with the greater satisfaction felt by playcentre volunteers.

TABLE 3.15: FELT LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF VOLUNTEERS BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Kindergarten		Playcentre		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very high	17	23.3	38	44.7	55	34.6
High	34	46.6	35	41.2	69	43.4
Moderate	19	26.0	11	13.0	30	18.9
Low	3	4.0	1	1.2	4	4.1
	73	99.9	85	100.1	158	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 11.18; \text{ df} = 3; p < 0.05.$$

All the volunteers who admitted a low level of satisfaction were male, and most of the men were on kindergarten committees.

Generally those who felt greatest satisfaction took on more positions and staying longer. Many said they became 'hooked'. When asked to name the sources of satisfaction, the most often mentioned source was adult friendship (something the men had not sought, but later found gratifying). Benefits to children and a general feeling of personal satisfaction were also mentioned by more than 17 percent of the sample. The playcentre movement is very aware that good human relations lies at the heart of their remaining a viable parent-cooperative organisation so it fosters friendships, but some actions of some kindergarten committees in the mid-1970s inhibited the formation of friendships. For example, the Association stopped providing a cup of tea after meetings, thus removing the best opportunity for informal discussion.

It was paradoxical that other parents (a different group) provided the main source of frustration. Parent apathy in supporting the pre-school centre made both playcentre and kindergarten volunteers angry. They differed, however, in their perception of the foci for the second major frustration listed. Bureaucratic behaviour (government and kindergarten movement) was frustrating for kindergarten volunteers, while problems with the centres' accommodation and personality clashes were dominant in the playcentre list.

Many of the decisions described in the historical chapter (Chapter 5) and three of the four strategic choices analysed in Chapters 6 and 7 were made largely by national level

volunteers, probably in consultation with Department of Education officials. A brief overview of their social characteristics seem pertinent for this reason. National level volunteers were older; most no longer had pre-school children; they had larger families; and had been a pre-school volunteer longer than was the case for local and association committee members. National members were willing to serve longer in the future and more felt a high level of satisfaction than did the other volunteers. The last two characteristics contributed to both movements tending towards obligarchy, although the playcentre organisation's desire for 'new-blood' lessened this tendency.

Decision-making The information from the Pre-school Volunteers' Survey was mostly about the characteristics of these people, but some information on their opinions about styles of decision-making provides a bridge between the survey data and the descriptions of strategic choice processes.

With the exception of volunteers on the kindergarten association committee, the majority of every type of volunteer said that consensus decision-making predominated in their committee activities.

TABLE 3.16: TYPE OF DECISION-MAKING BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	<u>Local</u>		<u>Association</u>		<u>National</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	Play-centre	Kindergarten	Play-centre	Kindergarten	Play-centre	Kindergarten	Play-centre	Kindergarten
Consensus	23 41.1	26 54.2	7 53.8	5 33.3	12 70.6	4 50.0	42 48.8	35 49.3
Mixed	11 19.6	4 8.3	3 23.1	3 20.0	4 23.5	1 12.5	18 20.9	8 11.3
Oligarchic	22 39.3	18 37.5	3 23.1	7 46.7	1 5.9	3 37.5	26 30.2	28 39.4
	56 100.0	48 100.0	13 100.0	15 100.0	17 100.0	8 100.0	86 99.9	71 100.0

Between level $\chi^2 = 5.28$; $df = 4$; $p > 0.1$.

Between organisation:

$\chi^2 = 3.21$

$df = 2$

$p > 0.1$

Comparing the two movements, it was found that far greater proportions of both association and national volunteers in the kindergarten movement felt that decisions tended to be made by an inner-core rather than by general discussion leading to a consensus decision. As will be seen in Chapters 5 to 7 even the inner core did not have too much influence on some of the pre-school movement/Department of Education 'partnership' strategic choices.

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

A large proportion, 36 per cent, of pre-school families in my survey chose free kindergarten because they felt it was 'more organised' or had 'more discipline' or had 'better supervision'. Why did parents say such things as:

"I don't think playcentres give sufficient training in discipline before school".

and

"Kindergarten gives discipline by having times when children are organised to do things together; children need to learn this before school"?

(Parent interviewees)

Researchers in the field of early childhood education in New Zealand seem unconvinced that there are differences in programmes offered to children in playcentres and kindergartens. Geraldine McDonald writing in *Education* (1974) says "from the point of view of the child it is doubtful whether playcentre and kindergarten are alternative to each other; in fact the programmes of both are similar in aims, objectives and techniques" (p. 23). Barney (1975) also comments on a "folk-lore (which) holds that kindergarten provides better education for school than does playcentre ... For example, more attention is supposedly paid to completing tasks ..., there is said to be increasingly greater amounts of work with groups of children ...; and there is a 'sort of timetable'." (p. 157).

I was interested to find out whether these differences seen by parents were largely a myth; or whether these perceptions were valid, based on an accumulation of small but real differences which add up to a total that means something to parents subscribing to different child-rearing philosophies.

The Hypothesis In the early part of 1975, twenty-seven senior (300 and 400 level) sociology students each visited a kindergarten twice and a playcentre twice. Ten kindergartens and nine playcentres were used to investigate the hypothesis that there were differences between playcentre and kindergarten sessions. Five of the kindergartens were in the same suburb as five of the playcentres, and these five suburbs ranged from high SES to low SES areas. Of the remaining pre-school centres, two kindergartens and one playcentre were in low SES areas, and the balance were in middle SES areas. The students were asked to look not only at

the activities and the way they were presented, but also to take note of whether accommodation, number of adults present, age range of children and so on, had any effect on the organisation and style of discipline of each pre-school. It must be emphasized that, because of the limited scope of this part of the study, material in this chapter can only be regarded as exploratory.

First Impressions The students were asked to record their first impressions, putting themselves into the role of a prospective pre-school parent coming for a first visit. The buildings and sites of free kindergartens made the greatest impact. All but one kindergarten was given praise for its facilities. In contrast, the description of playcentre accommodation as 'cramped' or 'dreary' was used in relation to five centres. The way activities were laid out differed too. Students in five different kindergartens said activities were arranged in an ordered way; no playcentre put out table activities quite as systematically as did kindergartens. Kindergarten children were often described as too well dressed for play.

The first impression regarding all playcentres was the number of adults present and the way adults related to children in a more personal, informal manner. Prescott and Jones (1972) found that when there were large numbers of children per teacher, the teacher adopted an authoritarian style of leadership, but when there were fewer children per teacher, it was more probable that a less formal staff/children relationship evolved. The other dominant first impression of playcentres was the wide range of children, from 3 to 5 years old, at each session with toddlers belonging to the parent-helpers also present. Kindergartens usually have fairly homogeneous age groups mostly comprised of 4 year olds in 1975 because of the long waiting lists.

Ratio There was a much higher ratio of adults to children in the playcentres. The students were instructed to count the number of adults present half-way through each of the four sessions they observed. The ratios are based on a playcentre roll of 30 children per session and a kindergarten roll of 40 children per session. Adjustments were made for the Grade 2 kindergartens having 60 children on the roll.

TABLE 4.1: RATIO OF ADULTS : CHILDREN AT PRE-SCHOOL SESSIONS

	Kindergartens	Playcentres
Visit 1	1 : 12.5 children	1 : 4.1 children
Visit 2	1 : 12.1 children	1 : 3.7 children
	1 : 12.3 children	1 : 3.9 children

Time Allocation Such differences in the ratio had effects on other aspects of the playcentre and kindergarten sessions. How the head-teacher or supervisor spent her time, was affected by the ratio and also by the assistance given by the administrative committee. Tasks of the staff during sessions can be classified into three categories:

1. Working with the children, which involves being with and working at child-level with children;
2. General overseeing, which involves walking from group to group, or child to child, supervising and giving assistance briefly before moving to another child or group. This behaviour is more noticeable than the first category; and
3. Organisation and administration, which includes preparation of activities, paper administration task, arranging displays and telephone calls.

TABLE 4.2: TIME ALLOCATION OF HEAD-TEACHER/SUPERVISORS' TASKS

	Kindergarten	Playcentre
Working with children	45%	60%
	(Range: $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hours)	(Range: 1 - 2 hours)
General overseeing	22%	27%
	(Range: $\frac{1}{4}$ - 1 hour)	(Range: $\frac{1}{4}$ - 1 hour)
Organisation and administration	33%	13%
	(Range: $\frac{1}{4}$ - 2 hours)	(Range: 0 - 1 hour)

Thus the playcentre supervisor spent far more time unobtrusively working with children than did the kindergarten head-teacher, mainly because the head-teacher had less help from parents and therefore spent more time doing administrative work. During the time given to administrative tasks, the remaining adults are left to do all the interacting with the children. Therefore in the kindergartens where there were only two adults present (and this situation occurred in ten of the fifty-four students' visits)

there is only one adult interacting with the children for one-third of the session, most probably in a more authoritarian manner.

Discipline During much of all the sessions observed, the children in both types of pre-school were so busy that they needed little disciplining, or they settled tussles themselves. However, it was found that kindergarten teachers used enforcing measures ('Do as I tell you' style) far more frequently than playcentre supervisors. Playcentre personnel tended to use positive forms of discipline more frequently.

TABLE 4.3: DISCIPLINE IN PRE-SCHOOL SESSIONS

Enforcement Measures	Instances in Kindergartens	Instances in Playcentres
Reprimands	18	7
Punishments (doing dishes, forbidden enjoyed activity)	5	(by own mother) 1
Children enforcing norms	3	-
	26	8
<u>Positive Measures</u>		
Prevent when trouble brewing	2	5
Distraction	5	7
Diverting with extra attention	5	5
	12	17

The greater use of enforcement measures in kindergarten probably reflects the high ratio of children to adults. This type of discipline is more noticeable to other children and visiting adults, than are quiet diversions. One student suggested that the style of discipline in each type of pre-school centre may suit different types of parents. "I think the discipline I saw in the kindergarten would appeal to many parents because it is obvious. A socially accepted code of behaviour is taught. A great many people get to know if someone deviates and this enhances the chances of the rest conforming ... The discipline I saw at playcentre is not so obvious and tended towards self-discipline and respect of the rights of others ... I suspect that discipline to many parents means imposing their values on children, and since this seems to be achieved in the kindergarten, it follows that

parents may feel happier with this discipline than with that at playcentre which is less insistent on the superiority of adults' values vis-a-vis the child's."

Group Activities Although there appeared to be little difference between the type and number of play activities provided in a kindergarten and in a playcentre, it was noticeable that there was a difference in the methods used to introduce activities to the children. These methods are categorised as obvious or unobtrusive in Table 4.4 below:

TABLE 4.4: METHODS OF INTRODUCING ACTIVITIES

Obvious	No. of Kindergartens	No. of Playcentres
Loud announcement	8	2
Quiet announcement to nearby group	6	5
<u>Unobtrusive</u>		
Adults sit down with children and suggest new ideas	5	9
Adults sit down and build on what children doing	2	3
Put new material out	10	9

Playcentre leaders interpret the free play philosophy as including giving children the freedom to play for as long as they choose without adult interruption. On looking at how many group activities occurred, it was found that kindergartens had an average of 3.5 (range: 2 - 5) large group activities per session that were initiated by the staff compared with playcentres who averaged 2 (range: 0 - 3) large groups per session. There was 100 per cent attendance at mat-time when the children sat on the mat at the end of the kindergarten session in six kindergartens; in the other kindergartens, staff allowed 1-2 children to help with cleaning up or to roam. Playcentres do not generally have mat-time. At the other group activities, in both kindergartens and playcentres, children are generally free to choose whether to join in or carry on with what they are doing.

Morning Tea Morning tea is one activity which can be a group or individual activity. The arrangements for tea breaks was often mentioned by parents during interviews as one area giving concern as to the discipline in playcentres. It was found that five of

the kindergartens had a formal morning tea where the staff determined when, what and how the morning tea was served. No playcentre had quite so structured a method of serving morning tea. Six playcentres but no kindergartens served morning tea on demand, and the informality of this method seemed to upset parents who were stricter about food-consumption habits. Five kindergartens and three playcentres used a semi-formal method with a few restrictions on time and more restrictions as to what happened about food and drink.

End of Session Once again, kindergarten staff are more likely to turn this into a group activity. The children were asked to help tidy up in eight out of the ten kindergartens, followed by mat-time. Everything was ship-shape by closing time in all but three kindergartens. This was an organisational necessity if staff were to get a lunch break before the next group arrived. In contrast children were seldom seen tidying up at playcentres - a further aspect of playcentre functioning which causes many parents to complain about discipline. Half the playcentres had adults tidy abandoned activities in the last ¼ hour and half still had all activities out at closing time.

Summary Although the numbers of pre-school centres and the number of observation periods used in this study are too few to allow definitive statements to be made, I think there is sufficient evidence contained in the student records to suggest clear differences between playcentre sessions and kindergarten sessions in the Wellington city area which seem to stem from two sources:

1. The ratio of adults to children, which influences:
 - (a) the adult/child relationship;
 - (b) the amount of time the head teacher/supervisor has to spend with the children;
 - (c) the style of discipline; and
2. The interpretation of the free play philosophy, which influences:
 - (a) the number of group activities; and
 - (b) the methods used to introduce new activities.

These differences are enhanced by the physical environment provided and by the age range of the children.

It would seem that although such differences are usually quite subtle, parents with dissimilar child-rearing philosophies do make distinctions and they select the service which best suits

their philosophy. Betz and Judkins (1975) concluded that members join voluntary organisations more as a means for the support of attitudes held prior to joining, than as a means of changing attitudes; and it would seem that this exploration of playcentre and kindergarten sessions supports their conclusion. The question of 'match' therefore becomes important for those parents who have no choice about which pre-school voluntary organisation they can use.

NOTE: Pre-school Staff Survey Information Regarding Sessions
Several items were included in the Pre-school Staff Survey interview schedule pertaining to the children's session, which produced some interesting data. I discovered that 9 percent of the kindergartens operated without any staff planning the programme, and 20 percent of playcentre staff said they did not plan a programme. Twenty-two percent of the kindergarten sample did not tell the parent helpers about what was happening during the session, but only 5 percent of the playcentre sample said that they did not have a discussion with the day's rostered parent helper.

Because the Union President had said that many children, other than those on kindergarten rolls, received early childhood education each week in kindergarten pre-entry groups, I asked how many kindergartens had pre-entry groups. Only one kindergarten in the Wellington Association had a group each week (two did later in 1975); 22 per cent had one group per term; 39 per cent had a group occasionally; and 35 per cent of the kindergartens did not have pre-entry groups at all. The majority of those kindergartens which ran pre-entry groups once a term or when the occasion arose (that is, when a largish number of children were expected to start in a short space of time) only had one meeting before the children joined the full session and the remainder had two gatherings. The claim therefore that many more children are receiving kindergarten education than roll numbers indicate would appear to be exaggerated, if Wellington kindergarten pre-entry group practices are anything to go by.

THE HISTORY OF THE PLAYCENTRE AND FREE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENTS

The historical chapter serves both to describe the pattern of early decision-making processes and to show some of the ways the playcentre movement differs from the free kindergarten movement. It is necessary to place the events of the 1970s into historical context to understand the four strategic choices discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Some conclusions are drawn at the end of this chapter, but I will leave the reader to make most of the comparisons without my labelling points of similarity or difference.

THE HISTORY OF THE PLAYCENTRE ORGANISATION

The description of the whole organisation's development will contain illustrative material from the Wellington Playcentre Association because the Wellington Association was studied in rather more detail than were other associations.

Beginnings The playcentre movement grew from two different seedlings which were grafted together in 1948. In 1938 Gwen and Crawford Somerset established the Feilding Community Centre for Further Education, and Gwen Somerset also started the Community Centre Nursery School. She believed that if parents participated in play groups, then adult education could be integrated with the other 'frontier' of education - early childhood education. The stated objective for the nursery school was, therefore adult education, as the nursery school existed to provide a practical basis for mothers' and secondary school pupils' discussions on child development.

The other seedling grew from an idea proposed by Inge Smithells and Joan Wood soon after the outbreak of World War II. With the help of Beatrice Beeby, their idea became reality in Karori, then Kelburn (both Wellington suburbs), in early 1941. Groups of mothers joined together to run co-operative playcentres to "provide leisure time for mothers" (*Playcentre Journal*, No. 7, 1962). "Opportunities for the social development of pre-school children" was the second objective set down by the Wellington Association after it was established later in 1941. The founding members of the Association agreed that time and effort should not be wasted on fund-raising, and this is still a general feature of the whole movement.

The grafting of the two seedlings was a gradual process. Gwen Somerset and Beatrice Beeby were friends, and as a result, the Feilding Nursery School had its title changed to Feilding

Play Centre, and Gwen Somerset gave occasional adult education lectures to playcentre personnel in Wellington when she visited there. In 1948, the Somersets moved to Wellington and Gwen was elected to two influential positions within the playcentre organisation that year: the first Supervisor of Training to the Wellington Association, and the first Federation President.

The third seedling had been growing in Christchurch since 1941 under Doreen Doulton, and this was soon followed by Auckland's first playcentre in 1944. Thus, the constituent parts of the movement had been functioning independently for several years before a national body was formed. The inaugural meeting of the Federation met in December 1946, primarily to consider the distribution of a £100 grant from the Department of Education, and decided that it should be spent on the training of supervisors, subsidising staff salaries, and equipment. Federation decision-makers voted that the £1,000 grant given in 1948 should be handed over to the associations on a pro rata basis for them to decide on functional allocation. Other major agenda items at that first conference were equipment lists and federation publications. These early strategies of devolving decision-making regarding expenditure of grants, whilst centralising equipment lists and publications, also established important precedents. Thus, the Wellington Association (and possibly others) reflected the Federation interest in equipment by spending its share of the grant on equipment and creative materials.

In 1949 I Play and I Grow (N.Z. Play Centre Federation, 1949) was adopted as the national 'book of words'. It set out the objects for the movement, giving emphasis first to providing a service to children, and secondly to the relief and educative service to mothers. Also outline were standard equipment; parents' tasks; structure and tasks of association and Federation; and the methods for children's sessions (which, at that time, were fairly structured).

Parent Education and Training There was some ambivalence about the separate identity of the playcentre organisation at that time. The Federation annual report, 1949, said "the converting of some playcentres to kindergartens might be regarded as a natural growth of a playcentre", but when Government agreed to pay kindergarten teachers' salaries in 1948 on the condition that kindergartens had afternoon sessions, the playcentre movement did not negotiate to continue and/or increase its afternoon use of some kindergarten facilities for playcentres. (This option was open at that stage to kindergartens and playcentres, although not explicitly stated, according to Moira Gallagher,

a former Officer for Pre-school Education). Instead, the playcentre associations chose to train parents as supervisors for all centres. This strategic choice meant that the separate identity of the playcentre movement was maintained and the practical reality of the philosophical belief in parents as the best educators of their own children was reinforced. In the Wellington Association, a short course of observations and 6 lectures had existed since 1946. The course was extended in 1949 to 20 lectures and, in 1952, practical assignments and discussion sessions were added to the theoretical part of the course. Prior to the introduction of training schemes in the different associations most of the supervisors had mainly worked alongside experienced people and relied on intuition and the occasional lecture to supplement this practical training.

The adoption of obligatory Introductory Talks at the 1960 Federation Conference, after 6 years of debate, has since meant that not only do parents training as supervisors receive training for their role as educators but also all attending parents receive a minimum of three parent education talks which aim to help them interact more effectively with children at home or at playcentre. The Wellington Association had foreshadowed the Federation strategy by publishing Introductory pamphlets in 1951 and making Introductory Talks compulsory in 1954. Because of the education/training service offered to parents, the playcentre movement must be regarded as a dual service having two principal tasks - adult education and early childhood education. These tasks are inextricably intertwined; a fact which involved members recognise and often reiterate. For example, the Foreword to a Playcentre Journal quoted below is typical of statements made in many playcentre contexts to encourage parents to learn more about children.

"If you want to participate in your child's education, if you want to learn as he learns, if you want to watch him develop and help him by knowing how to help him learn and grow effectively - Playcentre is for you".

(Playcentre Journal, No. 30, 1974, p. 2)

However, people outside the organisation do not appear to appreciate the interaction between the two forms of education so well. Two brief examples are the inadequate Government grants for training and support of parent education programmes until 1977, and inadequate space for parent education activities in the playcentre building codedrawn up by departmental officers..

Standardisation of training for all associations has been a perennial issue for the Federation since the first schemes

were set up in the late 1940's. On many occasions, a common syllabus of training for New Zealand has been mooted, but the view that "associations be allowed to meet the problems peculiar to their areas" has continued to get the majority vote. The advantages of separate training schemes are flexibility in suiting local needs and the diffusion of ideas and practices when different associations (each running their own training programme) meet. These advantages are seen to outweigh the advantages of a uniform training scheme.

Funding Policies In 1951 the channelling of funds changed. Established playcentres were given, directly, a per session grant once a term, while associations were granted a one-off grant for each new playcentre. The lower level groups had complete autonomy over expenditure of the funds, provided the playcentres maintained a minimum set of equipment. There were no Federation directives. More and more new centres were opened and management of the organisation posed some problems. In 1953, a Standing Committee was formed and the position of Dominion Adviser was created to assist with internal communication and support, and to consult with outside groups. Departmental officers questioned the extent of overlap and complementarity of the playcentre and free kindergarten movements and suggested, for example, greater sharing of facilities for training. Playcentre leaders saw the advantages of co-ordination but chose to strengthen the links with Adult Education departments rather than with the kindergarten training centres. For example, in 1957 the Wellington Regional Council for Adult Education sponsored a weekend workshop for Education Officers.

Maintaining playcentres as true parent co-operatives needs continuous effort and is not something that is fixed for all time. A pattern of periods of stability alternating with periods of a high turnover and/or lower standards apparent in an examination of the Wellington Association records, has probably beset every association and centre. Mechanisms are needed which encourage each new group of parents to take responsibility for their pre-school centre. Leaders have considered their own behaviour, the structure of the organisation and the payment of liaison, support people often through the years, investigating new ways of putting the principle of parental involvement in practice according to changing social conditions. Strategies to maintain parent participation have included: having parent councils rather than a committee; and keeping playcentres relaxed and welcoming so that everyone feels that the playcentre is run by the parents, not for the parents.

The debate about professional leaders, begun in the 1950's, still continues today. The arguments against permanent paid leaders are related to the concern that parents may lose the feeling that playcentre is a place of their own with the corollary that parent education programmes may be less effective. The arguments in favour of permanent leaders are to do with the size of the work load which is too great for volunteers to carry, particularly with a greater proportion of young mothers returning to the work force. As early as 1959, the Wellington Association asked the Regional Council for Adult Education to pay their tutors. It should be noted that most proposals for paid leaders suggest Government-paid, playcentre-employed personnel. The majority of 39 playcentre staff I interviewed in 1975 (see Chapter 3) said they would like future employment in the pre-school field if jobs were available. Beverley Morris (1966) had found this too.

Growth and Structural Changes The authority structures of associations have been altered every so often to improve contact between leaders and playcentre parents. Some associations have divided themselves horizontally adding Zone Officers (sometimes called Liaison Officers), while some have divided themselves vertically into branches, sub-associations or new associations. The Wellington Association has used both strategies at different times - Zone Advisers were introduced in 1953, the Hutt/Wairarapa Association was recognised in 1963 after it had existed as a Branch for 4 years, the Nelson Association came into being in 1969 and, after this split, the remaining playcentres were grouped into the Marlborough sub-association and a series of zones. All of these changes were strategies to cope with growth whilst maintaining the highly-valued easy and open communication between parents running local centres and association leaders. When centres are great distances away from the association headquarters, correspondence training courses are used. This has happened seldom in Wellington because of the formation of new associations and because the number of trainees makes tutor visits worthwhile.

The national body also had to decide in the 1950s and 60s how it would cope with growth and keep in contact with local-level activities. Neither Standing Committee nor the Policy Committee had a representative structure, so they may not have appreciated local issues when they were considering alternatives to recommend to conference. A National Executive, with a representative membership, was set up in the mid-1960's, with powers to implement Federation policy agreed upon at conference and to handle some lesser policy-decisions. The structure of National Executive with representatives from every association, and the practice of circulating full background information to all

members for discussion with their associations are designed to aid nationwide participation in Federation affairs.

An increased Government grant in 1961 was split between playcentres and associations, giving recognition to the role of associations in establishing new centres, supporting existing ones and training supervisors. The increased grant gave some local members the impression that playcentre was a Government service. To counter the tendency towards asking more and more of Government, Federation decided to levy centres for its own finance and to seek additional funds from the Golden Kiwi Lottery Board in 1963. A feeling of caution regarding Government control grew when legislation was passed in 1964 giving the Department of Education the responsibility for pre-school education, and causing Departmental officers to consult with Federation members about standards for opening and operating playcentres. The Department of Education taking responsibility meant that playcentres were exempt from Child Care Centre Regulations. Tensions arose because many playcentre members felt it was an association task to watch standards, not a Departmental one. As a consequence the 1966 Conference reflected a division between those who wanted to halt any increase in Government control and those who felt it was inevitable and suggested improved communication to develop a satisfactory partnership - the latter group won.

National level bodies were seen to be more important after the 1964 legislation and the following changes were made to Standing Committee and to Federation:

- (i) Standing Committee had some members elected from outside the town of the President and Secretary to ensure a greater breadth of knowledge.
- (ii) A Federation Education Sub-committee was created in 1968 to co-ordinate training matters and to advise associations on the maintenance of supervision standards, leaving administrative tasks to National Executive.

It was not only the relationship with the Department which stimulated a proposal for new forms of committee. After Federation Conference agreed in 1963 to co-operate with the Maori Education Foundation (MEF) to provide early childhood and adult education to Maori families, the growth in new centres was rapid, leading to a strain on resources with a consequent lowering of standards in some areas. By 1968 it was felt that one MEF Pre-school officer was insufficient; more officers to do liaison work in the same way as the MEF Pre-school Officer were needed. The playcentre and kindergarten movements issued a joint policy state-

ment in 1968 saying, in effect, that New Zealand should be divided into areas, each of which would have a liaison officer working with both types of pre-school centre. Government has persistently refused to agree to pay for such officers employed by a voluntary organisation each time a revised case has been submitted; so leaders gave more and more voluntary time to supporting centres and training supervisors. A more general grant for training expenses was announced in the 1977 Budget, and it is more suitable, in this writer's view, than a grant for a specialised job, probably with inhibiting specifications written in.

Committee of Inquiry Into Pre-school Education In 1970 the Federation Standing Committee's energy was devoted to preparing submissions for the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education for circulation for association approval and in 1971-72 to reacting to the Hill Report. The main criticism from playcentre members was that the Committee did not include parent education in its frame of reference, which meant it failed to address itself to half the playcentre movements' tasks.

The Labour Government in power from 1972 to 1975, appeared to adopt the Hill Report as its pre-school education manifesto, as most of the recommendations were implemented during those years. Federation officers were increasingly involved in relating to Government: indirectly on new committees such as the National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education; and directly to facilitate the Implementation of the recommendations in a manner which did not erode parental involvement too much.

The new grants arising out of the Hill Report which have affected the playcentre movement most are: free sites, the subsidies on playcentre buildings, and the buildings maintenance grant. In 1971 Federation conference refused to agree to supply the Department with a buildings priority list because they did not want purpose-built buildings, nor had procedures been devised for ascertaining greatest need in a reasonably democratic manner. Buildings subsidies for new buildings and for renovations to existing buildings were granted in 1973 and there will be a more detailed discussion of this strategic choice process in the next chapter. After watching what happened to playcentres who built centres in the 1960's, Federation interest in buildings had waned because parent education/training suffers while the building process is on-going. But the announcement regarding building grants excited the organisers of local centres who were dissatisfied with rented accommodation. Their enthusiasm pressured association and Federation personnel into hours of negotiation to

obtain satisfactory conditions in the general policy and for specific centres. It is ironic that the only case before Government for years was for Liaison Officers to relieve the pressure on volunteers, but the strategic decision given to the organisation was for buildings which involved leaders in many further hours of voluntary work. In addition, the 1973 increase in grants for running costs actually left associations with a relatively smaller amount of money for liaison work. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is cynicism voiced by some members about the strategic decisions being made for the movement by Cabinet. The Auckland Association for example has gone beyond voicing its dissatisfactions about misplaced emphasis, and has sometimes chosen the 'exit option' (Hirschman, 1970). One example being its refusal of the buildings maintenance grant and the training grant introduced late in 1977 to assist with the expenses in training supervisors and assistants as well as liaison and training officers.

This option is a direct protest against being accountable to the Department of Education. There were an increasing number of comments by Departmental officials about the need to supervise taxpayers' money during the mid-1970's. The playcentre ideology is that parents should be running playcentres themselves. Members feel that organisers of playcentres should be primarily accountable to the parents in each co-operative centre. The issue of accountability will be discussed again in the concluding chapter.

Looking back over the years, a number of themes regarding the playcentre movement's history can be identified.

1. The characteristic of the playcentre movement which gave it an identity separate from the kindergarten movement is the belief that early childhood education is most effective when parent and child learn together, and the practical manifestations of this belief. Asking all parents to attend three Introductory Talks and some parents to train to be supervisors were critical strategies in ensuring that parents took full responsibility for running playcentres.
2. Once the identity of the movement was established as a parent co-operative pre-school movement, two types of threat to that identity keep reappearing:
 - (a) Changes in Government funds and control which do not adequately take into account parental involvement, although the training grant is an improvement.
 - (b) Parents themselves not realising the significance of

their involvement because they do not want to, or because of weak communication and/or support from association personnel when resources are stretched.

3. Growth in size has meant greater work loads for volunteers but despite this, no decisions have been made to introduce:
 - (a) uniform training schemes,
 - (b) uniform association structures,
 - (c) standard rules and regulations for all associations.

Belief in association autonomy to maintain flexibility has ensured that each association functions in the way that best suits local needs.

THE HISTORY OF THE FREE KINDERGARTEN ORGANISATION

Beginnings Information about the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's early activities will be used as illustrative material in this history of the whole movement.

The first 'public kindergarten' was founded in Dunedin in 1889. The Rev. Dr Rutherford Waddell was concerned about the number of "little ragged, unkempt, barefooted children" (Simpson, 1970, p. 7) he saw on the streets of Dunedin. He discussed the situation and his idea for a kindergarten with Mr Mark Cohen, editor of the Evening Star. Mr Cohen advised that an educational component should be added to the Rev. Waddell's plan for groups of children coming to the church hall to be entertained by young Christian women. A committee was formed who agreed that they should try to get a trained teacher to start a kindergarten. Miss Wienecke, from Christchurch, was approached and she agreed, subject to her being allowed to teach Christianity. She began work in June 1889 at the Dunedin Free Kindergarten. It should be noted that private kindergartens had been in existence before that time - at least two were running in Christchurch.

In 1906, the first Wellington free kindergarten was opened in a Sunday School room. The idea behind this kindergarten was also a philanthropic one. Miss Mary Richmond, President of the Wellington Froebel Society, was concerned for the little children she saw sitting about on dirty pavements, and launched herself into fund-raising and other activities to get a kindergarten for them. Auckland formed an Association in 1908, but Christchurch did not establish its 'Creche and Kindergarten Association' for free kindergartens until 1911.

Although associations had not been formed in 1904, the

Government made its first grant of £500 to free kindergartens in that year. It was divided between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. In 1909 the first approach to Government for it to take over a free kindergarten, Wellington's first, was made. The Education Department devised a policy about voluntary kindergartens at that point in time, agreeing that kindergartens should be 'recognised' and inspected and given a capitation grant. No take-over was agreed upon.

Early in the history of the movement, members felt that purpose-built kindergartens were desirable. Auckland was the first association to erect a permanent building in 1910; Christchurch and Dunedin followed in 1911 and 1913 respectively; and Wellington moved the Taranaki Street kindergarten into a specially converted building for 100 children (plus Principal and students) in 1917.

Government had agreed to pay £600 of the costs of a new kindergarten training building in Wellington if the property was vested in it. For the only time in the history of the movement, association leaders said a flat 'No' to Government funds. They decided to convert a factory rather than accept the terms offered.

In 1909 a £1 for £1 subsidy was given for monies collected by associations and, in 1914, an additional capitation grant of £2 per head was begun. Obviously the Union was not needed before the movement could receive State funds. Twenty-two years elapsed between receiving the first Government grant and the formation in 1926 of a Union to decide on policy.

Early Years of the Union An early Union publication gave training needs as the impetus behind the re-formation of the Union in 1926. In 1913 a national association had been formed, but the outbreak of World War I in 1914 had the effect of putting it into recess with no further conferences being convened until 1920. In the 1920s there was a growing feeling that there should be a national body to promote a common goal and uniform training methods. Simpson (1970) describes the establishment of the Union thus:

"There seems to have been little more consultation on a national scale until 1926 when, at a meeting in Wellington, the Free Kindergarten Union was revived. Delegates from five associations: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill, decided that membership of the Union should be open to all associations receiving

Government recognition and that conference should be held biennially. A standing committee representing associations was set up". (p. 17)

Lady Sidey of Dunedin was elected as President of the Union and it was she who started the pattern of Presidential long-service which has generally continued through the Union's history.

At the 1926 conference it was agreed that training was important enough to hold courses for Trainers in the year intervening between Union conferences. The four original associations had begun training schemes between 1910-1912. Training, for girls who paid to become kindergarteners, usually took the form of lectures in the afternoons after the mornings had been spent working in kindergartens. Women who completed kindergarten training could be accredited with one year of primary training if they changed their career. Each Training Centre usually employed a full-time Trainer (later called Principal), who was also responsible for the standards of the children's sessions in kindergartens, and part-time lecturers. Commonalities in training programmes were attained via the biennial Principals' conferences. There was also an Education Committee in Wellington which decided on training policy and it was chaired by Wellington's examiner, Miss England. Although the Union deemed itself responsible for kindergarten standards by way of monitoring the Principals' reports, it did not start awarding Union Diplomas until 1950. Before then, each Training Centre had its own examinations and awarded its own certificate.

Owing to the loss or disorganisation of Union records, little is known about the Union activities between 1926 and approximately 1945. However, Wellington Association records tell us that there was discussion in the mid-1920s of a Government takeover when the 'time was ripe'. New associations became affiliated when they adopted the Union Constitution and became an incorporated society. But the movement expanded somewhat slowly, comprising only 45 kindergartens by the end of World War II. The Hamilton Association attempted to start its own training scheme in 1920 but it only survived 3 years.

Each of the four Training Centres remained the responsibility of the association in which they were located until the 1961 Union conference decided that all associations should share in the cost of training. This event had been preceded by the Union Executive expanding to include some non-training association representatives.

Through those years the Union was the co-ordinating body for

all members and also had the task of negotiating for student allowances (first granted in 1941) and teachers' salaries (first granted in 1948). The NZFKTA did not adopt this latter role until 1958.

A Time of Change Late in World War II, two important and related events in the environment resulted in change for the whole movement. The first was the growth in demand for kindergarten education by parents; the second was the setting up of a Consultative Committee on Pre-school Education in 1945. These external changes coincided with an internal change of leadership in the movement which organisational studies indicate is associated with receptiveness to trying new strategies (Zald, 1970). The growth in demand was common to many Western countries, (see, for example, Blackstone, 1971). Social and economic changes during the war changed attitudes about the role of the family and the role of women (women were encouraged into the workforce); and more parents began asking that educational institutions help them with socialisation tasks, so long as they could be involved in the pre-school institutions. Consequently, by 1945 the kindergarten local committees were mostly composed of interested parents. This increase in demand came at a time when there was a Labour Government in power willing to spend money on pre-school education.

Funding Changes In 1948, Government funding changed. Capitation grants were replaced by Government paying teachers' salaries. This relieved the pressure on volunteers for fund-raising and made salaries uniform all over New Zealand. In addition to this change, the subsidies were also raised from £1 for £1, to £2 for £1; and student allowances were increased. All this was to encourage expansion. The conditions attached to the new funding policies included:

- (i) The head teacher had to be trained;
- (ii) A minimum weekly schedule of services had to be adhered to, which included some afternoon sessions;
- (iii) A ratio of one teacher to twenty children had to be adopted, with a maximum roll of 60.

These conditions gave Government considerable control over kindergarten activities. In Wellington, the changes were made even more dramatic by the retirement of both the Principal and the Director of the oldest kindergarten, who had given 20 and 34 years service respectively in their positions.

Consultative Committee Shortly before the Report of the

Consultative Committee on Pre-school Educational Services (Bailey Report) was published in 1947, a supervisor of Pre-school Services was appointed to the Department of Education staff. When the new grants were made in 1948, she met with the Principals to write a New Zealand syllabus for kindergarten teacher training. This, and the grants, were probably meant to anticipate the implementation of the recommendations of the Consultative Committee. But implementation of the plans for a rapid expansion of pre-school services and the State gradually taking full responsibility for provision were averted by two changes of Government and by the 'baby boom' stretching the resources of the whole education system to its limits.

The kindergarten movement did expand unfettered with the new parent interest and the additional support until the 'baby boom' became apparent. By the end of 1949 there were 80 kindergartens and another 20 were established in 1950. Such expansion outstripped the supply of kindergarten teachers. When 'baby boom' children reached the primary schools, the Education Department had to give top priority to finding resources for them. The Union and the Department therefore had to consult over ways to reduce the kindergarten growth rate in the 1950's.

No Collaboration with Playcentres To return to the 'year of great change', 1948, it will be recalled that kindergarten teachers were required to include two afternoon sessions in the schedule of work. The Bailey report recommended a 'play centre service' and saw playcentres and kindergartens merging, because they doubted that the playcentre voluntary organisations had the resources to keep expanding indefinitely. Kindergarten teachers who had been supervising in playcentres said that they found the work 'distasteful and extremely tiring'. They disliked the turnover of mother helpers and found that playcentre associations gave insufficient direction to their members. The Principals recommended to the 1947 Union conference that kindergarten organisations organise the afternoon sessions. This recommendation eventually became policy and, as stated in the early part of this chapter, the playcentres which were using kindergarten resources found other venues and held more training courses to enable mothers to become playcentre supervisors.

The Union Executive It has been said that the Union was re-born in 1951. A new president, Mrs Minnie Johnson, was elected that year and she was reputed to be the first leader for many years who 'thought nationally'. The long presiding Union secretary Miss Maude England (also examiner for the Wellington Association), had dominated the Union up until 1949 when she relinquished

office. There was a lot of parochialism until Mrs Johnson took office and some bitterness about Union control. Auckland Association, for example, had withdrawn from the Union as far back as 1944. But, by 1954, Minnie Johnson had succeeded in bringing the Union together again, largely by revising the Constitution.

This President also had the unenviable task of devising ways, with the Government, for slowing expansion to improve staff standards. In 1952 a new Regulation was introduced stating that no new kindergarten could be recognised unless all existing kindergartens in that association were fully staffed with trained kindergarten teachers. Expansion slackened; but there was an unforeseen consequence: a proliferation of new one-kindergarten associations were established, all experiencing similar 'teething' problems and making national co-ordination difficult.

Restraints on Expansion The one-kindergarten association loop-hole and the high loss-rate of teachers meant that in 1956 one-third of the teachers were still untrained despite a salary increase in 1955. A 'period of consolidation' was agreed upon that year to completely halt expansion. By 1958 'controlled expansion' was possible according to the number of teachers available. Three new kindergartens were allowed in 1958 and five in 1959, but there were still 30 more establishment committees waiting for subsidies.

The booklet, "sites, Buildings and Equipment" produced by the Department of Education in consultation with the Union, which had been issued as a guide to standards in 1954, became the gazetted Regulations in 1959. These Regulations provided recognition for the Union, as the body which represented associations regarding policy matters; and clear-cut policies for staff and volunteers to work by. Included in the latter was the mandate that kindergartens have a permanent building of approved design.

Training During the 1950s training resources again became an issue. Regional meetings discussed how best to relieve pressure on the four Training Centres, because there was inadequate accommodation for increased numbers of students. It was suggested that there be only two much larger centres provided. However, in 1959 it was agreed not to make major changes. Wellington and Dunedin centres were re-housed and volunteers investigated ways to achieve wider sharing of training costs. A levy on all associations was introduced in 1961 to pay for training, but tensions still remained and requests were made in 1962 that

Government should take full responsibility for kindergarten teacher training. The Government refused but suggested Regional Councils of Management would broaden the decision-making base for training administration.

In the Wellington Association there had been some conflict in the early 1960s between the Executive and the Education Committee over their respective areas of responsibility for training. A Regional Council of Management presented itself as a possible solution, so it was agreed in 1965 to pilot such a body in Wellington. The other training centres created Boards of Study adding members not specifically belonging to the kindergarten movement. These changes effected closer relationships between the Centres and the university and Teachers College in each district; a useful relationship for when integration came about many years later.

Through the early 1960s the number of trainees continued to be a problem. When untrained staff in kindergartens reached 30 per cent in 1961, another 'period of consolidation' was declared although the 15 committees granted subsidies were allowed to proceed. The 1962 pay rise, the first negotiated by the NZFKTA, and the introduction of bonding in 1963 helped the staff situation considerably. In 1964 the 'period of consolidation' ended. However committees were not practised in handling new buildings procedures efficiently which hampered expansion until the President achieved streamlined procedures to get the maximum number of buildings open each year.

Amalgamation Policies Another major concern through the late 1950s and early 1960s was the proliferation of one-kindergarten associations. The Education Department suggested the Union in 1957 adopt an amalgamation policy. The Union Executive drew up suggested boundaries for larger associations and drafted a new Constitution to allow amalgamation. Generally, however, parochialism prevailed. Three small associations joined forces in 1959 and in 1960 seven associations, in the region where the President lived, amalgamated. Little else happened because neither the Department nor the Union felt they could dictate to associations.

Co-ordination A similar impasse threatened to develop when attempts were made to improve co-ordination between the playcentre and kindergarten movements. When the kindergarten movement could not expand at will, its leaders felt it might come to take second place to the playcentre movement. The idea of a joint gathering such as a Pre-school Convention was discussed for years but it was the Department of Education which took the initiative

to set up a meeting in 1960. A small committee was formed then and a joint Pre-school Association was finally formed in 1963, largely through the efforts of Gwen Somerset who lectured to kindergarten trainees as well as being heavily involved with playcentre work.

Support Workers Expansion places considerable pressures on the kindergarten volunteers. Regular requests began to go forward to the Department for Supervising Head Teachers for large associations, particularly in rural areas. Supervising Head Teachers were, however, appointed in the cities with Training Centres. This was to relieve not only the volunteers but also the Principals who had responsibility for the children's sessions in kindergartens. There has never been a satisfactory formula devised to put Supervising Head Teachers into rural areas. Although the case has been re-presented on several occasions, no solution has been found to the questions of 'who pays?' and to 'whom would these people be accountable to?' If such people visited kindergartens in several autonomous associations, who would oversee their work? Also, who would pay for their travel? If Government were to meet travelling costs as well as salary expenses then, to avoid overlap, it is probably better to use Pre-school Advisers who can visit playcentres, community pre-school workers, playgroups and so on during the same trip. Government officials have not agreed to implement the Union's request for Supervising Head Teachers hoping that the expansion of the Pre-school Advisory Service would meet both the playcentre and kindergarten movements' needs for more support services. Comments made to me during the Pre-school Staff survey in early 1975 indicate that the expansion needs to considerably exceed the numbers recommended in the Hill report. Staff said, for example, "The Pre-school Advisers are helpful but we don't see enough of them" and "The Pre-school Advisers are not here often enough to give sound advice".

Pre-school Advisers can do little to lessen the pressure felt by kindergarten volunteers, whereas Supervising Head Teachers may have. However, other schemes have lessened the administrative burden on volunteers during the 1970s: Education Boards now pay out teachers' salaries and are largely responsible for building maintenance. Also, grants are given to associations to assist with administrative costs.

Greater Use of Facilities Meeting the demand for kindergarten places has been the goal for kindergarten volunteers since the end of World War II, but reached its peak in the mid-1960s. In 1965 members, conscious of the demands and of all the purpose-

built kindergartens in existence, passed remits calling for more groups and/or greater roll sizes to better utilise facilities. Three (instead of two) 2-hour afternoon sessions were suggested, but when the Regulations were changed in 1968 it became obligatory for three 2½-hour sessions to be held. Staff have found the extra ½-hour very tiring for all concerned.

Six kindergartens began as pilot extended-roll kindergartens in 1967. They were to have an additional group of children, and after 2 years an evaluation was to be carried out. No changes to these schemes were possible until the evaluation was complete. KTA and Union members felt perturbed by this, particularly when the informal evaluation results were never made public. The KTA oppose extended-roll kindergartens chiefly on the grounds that teachers cannot effectively relate to 120 children and their parents each week. However, extended-roll kindergartens became Government policy in 1973 - the advantages of more children being catered for, won over the disadvantages of the strain on staff, the more superficial teacher-child relationship and the faster turnover-rate of children attending morning sessions. It is interesting to note that the kindergarten committees asked for far more of these kindergartens than either the Department would allow or the teachers would agree to teach in.

The Ward System In 1968, the Union President, Miss Ingram, decided there was a need to bring Union Executive members and association volunteers in closer contact. She delegated more tasks down the hierarchy and suggested that a Ward system would formalise the delegation. The 1971 Union conference agreed with the constitutional changes which led to the re-structuring of the Union Executive.

Parent Involvement The changed tasks of Executive members as well as a shift in public opinion about parental involvement have made Executive members increasingly aware of the effects of environmental changes (including funding) on parent involvement. Union members in the last three decades have sought parental involvement in the administrative tasks of the voluntary movement, whilst Departmental officers have persistently expressed concern about the lack of training for kindergarten parents. Indeed, Miss Gallagher, Officer for Pre-school Education in 1964, queried whether volunteers were keeping abreast with trends in education. Her successor, Miss Christison, did some research into adult education services and found few kindergarten parents enrolled there. When the grant to help with kindergarten running costs was announced in 1974, a senior Departmental officer stated that with less fund-raising needed, more parent

education should be possible (Pinder, 1974). The indications of the 1970s are that parent education through the voluntary system is dying, given the number of Mother's Clubs which have gone into recession, but teachers efforts towards parent education have been increasing.

The Union has become increasingly convinced in the last decade that it does not aspire to a State takeover, nor does it want grants which have too many conditions attached which stifle parent enthusiasm. But, there is some ambivalence about these policies. Executive members recognise that each new grant narrows the range of tasks over which parents have reasonable control, but these same members or their colleagues feel unable to discourage volunteers seeking more funds or to refuse increased Government grants. The ambivalence is clearly illustrated in the President's opening remarks to the 1973 conference:

"Parents being involved in the education of their children and thereby becoming more education themselves is more important than how the financial involvement of any Government is to be dictated ... We agreed that financial involvement (of parents) is necessary to retain and stimulate interest, but there are three areas where help is needed if we are to expand our service ... buildings, association administration costs, and a Union Officer grant".

(NZFKU Annual Meeting, 1973).

Most volunteers do not perceive any negative consequences from Government aid, so a steady stream of requests go from Union conferences to the Department. During the 1970s the following requests have been acceded to: free sites, running costs grants, bigger equipment sheds, a one-off grant for setting up a permanent Union office, assistance towards association administrative costs, free buildings in areas of special need, and refresher courses for staff. These new forms of Government assistance have left local committees with few tasks but increased the liaison work for executive members of associations and the Union.

Participation in Decision-Making The dwindling area of control had been a concern of national volunteers and they felt further threatened by the establishment of the National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education (NACPSE). The kindergarten volunteers are not happy that the main pre-school organisations are outnumbered on the Council and on the District Pre-school Committees. They believe that these bodies may try to formulate kindergarten policies which are the kindergarten movement's prerogative, and

this tends to result in their behaving rather defensively at these gatherings. It would appear that the fears are partly justified in that the Department seems to have substituted discussion of a proposal at NACPSE for face-to-face consultation on at least one occasion, (see Chapter 7).

The President stated at the 1974 Union conference that she thought the Department of Education was failing to consult the Union over decisions that were in its sphere. She said "Many of the changes taking shape are what we have asked for in submissions over many years - the strong objection is our non-involvement in the mechanics as to how these should be implemented - we must keep up with the play" (NZFKU Conference report, 1974). She cited three examples of non-consultation:

- (i) integration of kindergarten and primary teacher training;
- (ii) Education Boards taking over kindergarten teacher recruitment; and
- (iii) primary teachers being responsible for special groups in kindergartens.

The discussions in the mid 1970s leading towards piloting Regional Authorities offer further threats to the Union participating in all decisions affecting the kindergarten movement. Associations within the Regional-Authority boundaries may have to make some changes of policy just for their kindergartens which may not apply to kindergartens in other parts of New Zealand. The growing interest the idea of a Children's Commission could also mean considerable loss of power for the Union.

Looking back over the years, several themes relating to the kindergarten movement's history can be discovered:

1. The first kindergartens were opened by philanthropists for children. Over the years more and more parents volunteered to participate in the administration of the movement.
2. From the outset, trained staff were deemed necessary, but finding the resources to run Training Centres and keeping an adequate quota of trainees graduating has been a recurring problem through the years. Government recently taking full responsibility for training (see Chapter 7) has not fully resolved the manpower difficulties.
3. The growth in the movement has strained different resources in different periods - sometimes training resources, sometimes staff, most times support services and buildings. Generally the solution has been to make stronger cases to Government for greater assistance or to use facilities for

more children or students.

4. There has been an increasing amount of Government involvement in kindergarten provision which has always been welcomed with only some semi-private reservations. With the growth of Government control, there has been a concurrent diminution of areas for the volunteer decision-making and activity. This has not brought about increased participation in parent education as some Government officials had hoped.

To sum up, both movements provide pre-school education for children but the playcentre movement simultaneously provides parent education. Both now have mostly parents as voluntary administrators, but kindergartens use Teachers College trained staff while the playcentres train parents to be supervisors. The kindergarten movement has practically always welcomed Government assistance whilst the playcentre movement has resisted this quite often and overtly.

STRATEGIC CHOICES IN THE PLAYCENTRE MOVEMENT

There were many new policies in early childhood education in the 1970s. Of these, two of the playcentre movements new policies were chosen for close analysis because of the insights they could give into playcentre's methods of making strategic choices. The selection was based on questions which measured the importance playcentre people attached to the choice process. These questions (applied to the kindergarten movement also) asked: did leaders discuss the decision in a public address; did the decision's implementation take many extra hours of voluntary work; and did the chosen strategy have long-term consequences? It also seemed desirable to describe one internally-initiated and one State-dominated strategic choice process. For the playcentre movement, the internal decision selected was the Wellington Association's decision to raise their standards of supervision and to monitor those standards, whilst the State-dominated decision was to accept a grant for local playcentre buildings.

RAISING THE STANDARDS OF PLAYCENTRE SUPERVISION AND MONITORING STANDARDS The qualifications of supervisors has been an ongoing concern of playcentre leaders since the late 1940s when it was assumed that there is an association between training and standards of supervision. Gwen Somerset believed in the idea of training parents to supervise but met with opposition from some who feared the loss of 'voluntary spirit'. When she tried a 20 lecture course, the response surprised those in opposition - 100 people attended. This early success has been maintained, and in 1974 there were 1095 Helpers' Certificates, 371 Assistance Supervisors' Certificates, 304 Supervisors' Certificates and 118 National Supervisors' Certificates awarded in New Zealand by the playcentre movement.

The material here about standards of supervision refers to the Wellington Association and it should be noted that supervision requirements and the monitoring of standards of supervision differ from association to association. The Training Team in the Wellington Association in 1974 was made up of the Director of Training, the Education Officer, the Field Officer, the President (ex officio) and two co-opted tutors. Most of them had been the authors of the re-structured training scheme introduced in draft form to new trainees in 1973. The new scheme provided more levels of training: the Helpers' Certificate (Part I and Part II), then the Assistant Supervisors' and the Supervisors' Certificates (Part III and IV), and a new

Manual provided yardsticks to measure the training. Another significant event was the appointment of a new Director of Training in 1974.

How did the decision to set and monitor new standards of supervision come about? The Training Team report for the year 1973-74 gives the background.

... after much thought and discussion, we recommended to the Executive that they should uphold minimum standards of training in centres from the beginning of next year ... With the growth in the number of trainees* we felt this was the time to make this move - all the centres had the potential to meet the requirements ... The centres who perhaps have had to struggle to meet this requirement have already found, we think, renewed vigour and the need to work together and support each other - two very important features of a healthy play-centre.

(Wellington Playcentre Association Annual Report, 1974)

Formerly, the Association monitored standards of supervision through the centre's Liaison Officer, and via approval forms sent to the Training Team. Liaison Officers (former supervisors or centre office-bearers) linked the local centres to the Association. Fewer people had been volunteering to be Liaison Officers because of the creation of Area Officers in 1969 and because women's role had changed. Higher standards were expected as a consequence of the new training scheme but the association's monitoring of standards was weak and causing concern.

The system of monitoring standards by approval forms was far from foolproof. Some centres failed to send in the credentials of the proposed staff, and the Association Secretary often failed to tell the centres that their decision had been ratified until well after the beginning of term, giving the impression that Association personnel did not worry about standards. Concern about standards of supervision began to mount in late 1973. One of the largest Wellington playcentres, Karori, was having difficulty finding supervisors, and asked if the President of the centre might supervise. This request was against policy for a very practical reason - namely, overloading the willing few. The Association Executive tactics

* In 1972, 31 Helpers' Certificates were awarded - in 1974 there were 180!

were to ask the Liaison Officer to give more support, to supply extra tutors and to ask more Karori mothers to accept responsibilities.

As an aside, at the national level at that time, members of the Federation Education Sub-committee were discussing the National Certificate as it affected supervisors transferring from association to association. This agenda item probably stemmed from a small piece of research reported to the National Executive in late 1973 which said the four main problems of playcentres were: 1. lack of finance for Directors of Training, Field Officers, Liaison Officers, etc.; 2. insufficient numbers of advisers (playcentre and departmental); 3. not doing the Introductory Talks early and effectively enough; 4. not having a core of training for New Zealand to facilitate easy transfers. All of these problems relate to the issue of agreeing upon standards and monitoring them, at the national level as well as the association level.

Federation saw as a solution Government paid, playcentre-appointed, Field Officers. Unbeknown to playcentre people, the conception of Field Officers' fits overseas models for organising early childhood education (see Almy, 1975 and Karnes et al, 1975). Karnes et al call such people 'para-professional educator managers'. It is interesting to note that the turnover of personnel was affecting all levels of the organisation. Monetary reward was seen by playcentre leaders as the solution at the national level, but not seen as a solution for the local centres where rules and sanctions were applied to solve the same problem. It was recognised that recruitment was crucial for all levels of leadership and for this reason a lot of importance was attached to the Introductory Talks being an enjoyable learning experience which should set the parent onto the road of more learning and greater involvement.

Let me return to the Wellington Association. The difficulty Karori playcentre had in finding enough trained supervisors, prompted the Association Executive into asking the Training Team to check all partially-trained supervisors who had been given temporary approval only. Little was being done to follow those supervisors' progress in improving their qualifications. The retiring Director of Training outlined a strategy for improving standards of supervision. She felt imposing sanctions would be too upsetting to playcentre groups who were satisfied with under-qualified staff and therefore proposed that a letter be sent to the supervisor giving temporary approval, and asking that, as it was playcentre policy

to have trained personnel, could she do a specified training activity. If no progress was made after one term, a letter should go to the supervisor expressing concern and to the play-centre asking them to look for someone else. The Training Team wondered whether the volume of paper work was manageable.

Three pro forma letters were drafted early in 1974. The last one did not ask the centre to find a replacement, however. Instead, it read: 'Please would the centre assist the trainee to attend _____ courses'. The April Executive meeting approved these and agreed that many months of warning were needed before raising minimum standards. The Field Officer* was concerned that the present minimum standard, the Helpers' Certificate, was too low. The idea of group supervision for centres which could not reach the minimum was floated, but the decision was left open.

Three days later, members of the Training Team met with two Auckland trainers who described their system of introducing group supervision when there was no one sufficiently trained to fill a vacancy. This had two major advantages - it took the pressure off the committed mothers (who had been asked to train and supervise simultaneously) and it improved the public image of playcentres when inadequately trained people were not permitted to supervise.

Group supervision began to be suggested by Executive members to playcentres having supervision difficulties from that date forward. The pro forma letters and the idea of raised minimum standards were accepted by the Training Team and there was little further discussion. The details were simply announced as policy at an Education meeting for tutors on 18 April 1974. The announcement read:

As from February 1975 approval to supervise in centres will be given only to those applicants who have completed the work for at least an Assistants Certificate
... Approval to assist in centres from this date will be given only to those who have completed at least Part 2 of the manual. Permanent approval will be given to those with current supervisors certificates. The alternative to this is for centres without enough qualified people to run by group supervision.

(Wellington Playcentre Association Education Committee minutes, 1974)

* This person became the next Director of Training

When someone asked whether the proposal was open for discussion, the Director of Training designate said: "No. This is a decision. We must stand firm and have no bandying about." Three or four questions of clarification were asked and answered. It seemed that the general reaction of the educators was pleasure that playcentres were to get this 'shot in the arm'.

A few days later the Education Officer made the same announcement at the Association Council meeting, prefacing it by saying: "The following recommendations were made by the Training Team and confirmed by the Education Committee." Given the manner of their introduction the term 'recommendations' appears somewhat euphemistic!

Consequence 1: Reactions against the decision-making tactics

Centres, particularly multi-group ones like Karori which would be most affected by the decision, objected to the undemocratic procedures used to introduce the policy. They questioned whether Association personnel had constitutional rights to make rules about supervisor qualifications.

It is interesting to note in passing that the centres mostly likely to have under-qualified supervisors (according to Association criteria) were those in upper SES suburbs. These parents enjoyed being involved in their children's early childhood education, but were not prepared to add Playcentre Supervisor to their list of qualifications.

The main criticisms of the 'new rules' were that the decision-making was undemocratic; the introduction of the 'rules' was being rushed; and finally, that the rules meant that some staff who were good supervisors, from the groups of parents' point of view, would have to give up because they lacked the right paper qualifications. The third criticism is an example of Lawrence's (1966) views on resistance to change. He says that "what employees resist is usually not technical change but social change - the change in their human relationships" (p. 246). This would apply to voluntary organisations too, particularly if a group had to ask a group leader resign for 'bureaucratic' reasons.

Training Team members met with concerned parents in the Association. Karori parents said that their major concern was that there was insufficient time to get enough supervisors, and one group would have to close, thus depriving children of

early childhood education. When the Association President suggested group supervision, parents protested that they had too many commitments to come to every session. After further discussion, the Training Team was pressed into agreeing to an extension of time "if the centre could prove it had a good number of people in training, and every effort was being made to get people to Part 3 in the minimum possible time" (Wellington Association Newsletter, June 1975). This amount of flexibility made the decision more acceptable, and some other centres applied for an extension of time.

Consequence 2: Cross-crediting other qualifications assumed greater importance

At the meeting between parents and the Training Team, the issue of recognition of Kindergarten Diplomas, Teachers Certificates or overseas qualifications as supervisor qualifications was raised. The Training Team said that further playcentre training was required for such people. When a parent said the movement was laying itself open to charges of exclusiveness on this issue, the President replied that she felt that playcentre was for a particular type of family (implying families who want to join in with their children's pre-schooling). On being further pressed, Training Team members said the inflexibility was the fault of the Federation which does, indeed, say that other qualifications are not sufficient for playcentre. However, some associations are less stringent than Wellington was proposing to be and will allow some supervisors with other teaching qualifications far more credit towards their Supervisors Certificate.

The Association Newsletter Editor pursued this issue via a quick telephone survey of playcentre parents, and reported that some people felt non-acceptance of other qualifications to be inflexible, whilst other people felt that playcentre training had new things to offer regarding working with a wide age-range of children and functioning as a team of adults. My Pre-school Staff Survey data corroborated both points of view. A former teacher said:

"Playcentre training is more practical and more specific than teacher training. I was interested to learn more about working with parents."

(Staff interviewee, 1975)

By way of contrast, a former nursery school teacher felt she learned little that was new:

"The training was very good, but it covers much the same material as the Nursery School Association Certificate."

(Staff interviewee, 1975)

The issue was raised again in mid 1974 in letters to the Executive and at an Open Forum meeting, and the Director of Training designate emphasized the fact that playcentres are cooperatives and therefore their training focusses more on adults working with adults than other training schemes. Although the Training Team said they gave exemptions and tried to be flexible, it was common knowledge that the only concession was exemption from the child development course.

During interviews of staff members in 1975 I found considerable resentment was still felt about Association inflexibility over cross-crediting. This response was unsurprising given that the survey was done after the new standards had been implemented and those with other qualifications who had not reached a certain level of playcentre training had resigned and were still being missed. A feeling of alienation over this issue between centre personnel and Executive members persisted. Another letter about the minimum regulations and lack of acceptance of other qualifications reached the Executive at the end of 1975. The long letter of reply conceded:

Playcentre supervisors, kindergarten teachers and new entrant teachers would all welcome regulations which would enable them to move from one organisation to another, we are sure, but this is not yet accepted practice.

In 1978 a range of early childhood education organisations began discussions on cross-crediting for child care centre supervisors which may result in all of them finding of formula to ease transference between different types of organisation. A Child Care Coordinator was appointed in 1979 to devise a scheme in consultation with the people most affected, and planning is still going on.

Consequence 3: Reaction to group supervision

The policy of using group supervision when no sufficiently trained supervisor was available was greeted favourably by women who found the joint tasks of supervising and training too much. However, parents in many centres were displeased. The Association Newsletter reported:

"A survey of about 20 Wellington centres showed varied reactions ... Only two unequivocally approved the new measure ... 'this centre would be a tighter, more enthusiastic centre because of (group supervision)' ... Most centres were strongly opposed to group supervision. It was felt that mothers would not come along for a variety of valid reasons, as well as apathy."

(Wellington Association Newsletter, June 1974)

Expressions of opposition to group supervision were commonly heard at local level during the next few months, but there was little communication of this to Association members. Where it was voiced, there was a neutral response causing local parents to grumble about the Association 'turning a deaf ear'. From 1975 onwards, several centres used group supervision at some stage and found that it had both advantages and disadvantages. Centres' reactions to the experience varied from enthusiastic, to struggling. As most Wellington centres returned to ordinary supervision when they had a trained supervisor, the disadvantages of group supervision apparently outweighed the advantages.

Consequence 4: Group supervision versus retaining supervisors through higher pay

Higher pay to slow the loss-rate of supervisors was strongly advocated by both high and low SES parents during the 1974 Open Forum meeting. This proposal is resisted by association and national level personnel because:

1. The cost to families would increase beyond an acceptable level (unless Government paid the supervisors);
2. 'Professional' pay may increase the social distance between parents and staff to the detriment of the co-operative nature of playcentres. In the words of Owen Somerset:

"The usual trained pre-school teacher or expert may admit parent involvement up to a point, but the limit is soon reached. Parents may mix paint, help to tidy and clean, and raise money, but they may not challenge the layout of equipment or the programme. They must not be considered as decision-makers ... They are not trained ... There is a fence that says 'this far and no further'."

(Playcentre Journal No. 36, 1976)

There is little doubt that local people would like to slow down staff turnover and they see higher pay as a solution. A third of the supervisors surveyed in 1975 said that supervisors should be paid more. This was in response to the open-ended questions:

- (a) "Would you like Government/Association to offer more assistance to playcentres?" and
- (b) "Have you any comments you'd like to make about playcentre supervising?"

Paying more, however, may increase the 'danger' of staff not moving on. The Auckland Association has rules to ensure there is a change every 3 years. Despite there being no such rule in Wellington there was little indication that the turnover rate was too slow. In fact, the reverse happened. In 1975, of the 29 playcentres in the region, only three had no change of staff. Eleven groups (out of 46) had no change of Supervisors but only six groups had no new Assistants. Table 6.1 shows the rate of changes of supervision.

TABLE 6.1: TURNOVER OF WELLINGTON PLAYCENTRE ASSOCIATION SUPERVISORS (1975)

	Between Terms 1 & 2	Between Terms 2 & 3
New	7	9
Moved up from Asst. Spvr.	3	6
Change to group supervision	1	1
No change	32	29
No approval form sent in	3	3
	46	47

At the beginning of the second term 1975, 33 Assistant Supervisors were new to this role, this stabilized later to 23 new Assistants being approved for Term 3.

Consequence 5: Shortage of leaders

Because of feelings of alienation aroused during the process of raising standards of supervision and because local personnel had to give more time and energy to meeting the requirements, there were few local members willing to take on Association positions in 1974. A shortage of volunteers increases existing leaders' work loads which is off-putting

to those who are considering accepting nomination. When hours of work were recorded for a grant application many play-centre leaders found they spent 40-50 hours per week on play-centre activities for a few dollars towards expenses. No wonder paid employment is more attractive! A Government grant to pay leaders was strongly sought in the mid 1970s but the Federation case seemed to be held up because Government was investigating giving kindergartens comparable help, and their case for Supervising Head Teachers was neither so necessary nor so well formulated, in my opinion.

Consequence 6: Change in standards of supervision

Wellington Training Team members felt 1974 was the time to say "This is not good enough" - neither the standards nor the monitoring of standards was adequate. Only 16 of the 29 playcentres sought Association approval of their staff at the beginning of the year and 75 percent of these received no reply from the Association secretary until the term was one month old, which made the approval procedure rather meaningless. Two-thirds of those for whom approval was sought were not fully-qualified. (This is probably skewed data as 1975 analyses showed that those who failed to send in forms were people who met all the requirements). Of the thirty-two Assistants in 1974 for whom approval was sought, four had completed the Assistant Supervisors Certificate, half had not completed any sections, and the balance were part-trained.

In Terms 2 and 3, 1974, after the announcement about raised standards had been made, more centres sent in forms and all received a reply before term started. Also, the number of staff with no playcentre training had dropped to four by December. The few centres not up to standard were given a few weeks 'grace'. Table 6.2 shows the level of training of 1975 staff at the beginning of each term.

TABLE 6.2: STANDARDS OF SUPERVISION - WELLINGTON PLAYCENTRE ASSOCIATION (1975)

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
<u>Supervisors' Qualifications</u>			
Group supervision	0	1	1
Less than minimum*	5	7	9
Assistants Certificate	11	12	12
Supervisors' Certificate	30	26	25
No return	1	2	0
TOTAL NO. OF GROUPS	47	48	47
<u>Assistants' Qualifications</u>			
None*	3	5	7
Part I (less than minimum)	24	32	25
Part II	12	19	25
Parts III & IV	12	8	11
No return	7	-	1
TOTAL NO. OF ASSISTANTS	58	64	69

* includes those with other qualifications, not recognised

The above figures reveal that a few Supervisors and a considerable number of Assistants were still at a level of training below the minimum after the time limit set. The new 'rules' stabilized the number of fully qualified Supervisors and decreased the numbers of very inadequately trained staff.

Conclusions How did this strategic choice affect the performance of Wellington playcentres and the Association? The criteria for assessing performance stated earlier were organisational (user and worker satisfaction) and environmental (wider availability). The decision to insist that trainees were reasonably advanced in their training before they could supervise is an indication of the professionisation of early childhood education (Dinniss, 1974) taking place in New Zealand.

Using the theoretical framework introduced earlier (see Fig. 2.1, p. 11), we can say that a change in the technology - the new Training Manual - heightened people's awareness of

standards of supervision. Both the Manual and the higher qualifications required probably improved the quality of the adults' and children's programmes, given that trained people, on the whole, are better educators than untrained people. However, this may have been at the expense of an expansion of scale as group supervision centres have fewer children in order to accommodate more adults. Sanctions were imposed (group supervision was perceived that way generally) rather than rewards (higher pay) offered to ensure staff did train. Time is an important resource for voluntary organisations: whether trainees re-allocated time already given to playcentre work or invested more time per week is not known. The intention of the pro forma letter to the centre was to get members to relieve trainees of too many other responsibilities. For Training Team members, monitoring standards was an additional task and their reward was purposive one: they saw standards of supervision improve.

In the long term, playcentre members were happy with the strategic choice but at the time the decision was made there were mixed feelings. Some centres had difficulties meeting the requirements, others were happy that the Association had higher standards. Some individuals were disappointed knowing that their qualifications were now deemed inadequate, while others were pleased to have the pressure taken off them to train and supervise simultaneously. Several staff interviewees expressed sentiments such as:

"I would like playcentre Supervisors to be trained before they supervise. It is difficult to both train and supervise."

(Staff interviewee, 1975)

Association personnel were generally delighted to see the improved standards in centres.

Did the strategic choice make playcentre available to a wider range of social groups? I doubt it. As stated early, the number of places dropped and, although they were less vocal about any problems created, it is likely that the new requirements created difficulties for low SES centres. Data from my Pre-school Families Survey indicate why.

TABLE 6.3: USER PARENTS' SOCIAL PARTICIPATION SCORE BY TYPE OF SUBURB

Chapin Score	High SES		Medium SES		Low SES		Total
		%		%		%	%
0-8	3	10.3	16	34.8	17	47.2	36 32.4
9-19	12	41.4	25	54.3	14	38.9	51 45.9
20+	14	48.3	5	10.9	5	13.9	24 21.6
	29	100.0	46	100.0	36	100.0	111 99.9

$$\chi^2 = 20.9; df = 4; p < 0.01.$$

Only 13 percent of the parents in the low SES suburb had high social participation scores and 46 percent had low social participation scores. Although playcentre seems to be better at motivating people who do not have 'joiner' characteristics to become involved in pre-school activities, it is still difficult for low SES playcentres to fill all the positions of responsibility. This is compounded by the high geographic mobility of families in such suburbs - 41 percent of the Newtown pre-school families said they might move in the next twelve months, compared with 10 percent in the high SES suburb. It is likely that playcentres in low SES areas would have greater problems maintaining the new standards of supervision unless there was more support given them by the Association.

BUILDINGS SUBSIDIES FOR NEW PLAYCENTRES Accommodation for playcentres has been a problem for some groups from the very first years of the movement, but this issue occupied little leadership time relative to time spent on administration and parent education until the Government announced in 1973 that there would be free sites, and Scheme A and B* subsidies for playcentres.

The History of the Strategic Choice Prior to the late 1950s there was only occasional mention of buildings in playcentre records, and small grants from the Golden Kiwi lottery were almost the only source of funds. In 1959 there was an up-

* Scheme A subsidy: 4:1 subsidy for new buildings or buying suitable premises.

Scheme B subsidy: 4:1 subsidy (maximum \$7,000 from Government in 1980) for relocating and/or renovating premises.

serge of interest in buildings by Federation members. Gwen Somerset wrote a paper 'Building Your Own Nursery Playcentre' and drew up a specimen plan at the request of Standing Committee. She recommended that the Government be approached for building funds for those centres not able to find practicable community accommodation. A buildings policy was mapped out at the 1960 conference which recommended that playcentres should not be built where there was another pre-school service or where there was suitable community accommodation, and that playcentre buildings should not be exclusive of other use. A case to the Government was prepared and circulated to all associations for comment in early 1961. The Minister of Education rejected it. An approach to the Minister of Housing later in 1961 to set aside a 'community house' in new subdivisions also met with negative results. Federation leaders changed tactics by publicising the playcentre movement to churches and local authorities.

During the mid-1960s attention turned to the problem of the leadership shortage created by the rapid growth of the movement - training and finance being the key issues. A further case was put to Government in 1966 for buildings assistance but Cabinet ruled that the matter be deferred. After that year, Federation concentrated on requesting grants to pay leaders for liaison and training work.

In 1970 playcentre leaders prepared, circulated, then presented submissions to the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education. Of the 35 recommendations made by Federation, only two directly referred to buildings:

4(b) That, in view of the dwindling supply of redundant prefabricated buildings, the Education Department produce a lowcost shell building suitable for pre-schools on school property or other sites, to be maintained and run by the parents of the pre-school children.

4(c) That the building subsidy of 2 to 1 be extended to cover all buildings.

(Playcentre Journal No. 18, 1970)

Presumably the latter recommendation meant that the playcentre organisation desired the same buildings subsidy as free kindergartens.

Overall, Federation placed little emphasis on buildings in their submissions. Five playcentre associations and some

individual parents also made submissions, and they may have focussed more on accommodation because the Report of the Committee of Inquiry (1971) discussed buildings at some length:

Relatively few playcentres own their buildings and even fewer have had them built to pre-school specifications. In general policy has favoured the renting of premises which avoids the side-tracking effects of extensive money-raising and significantly reduces the delays before a centre can be opened. But suitable halls are often hard to come by in new housing areas; and in old localities, where playcentres are well-established and stable, parents are often conscious of a need for buildings designed particularly for pre-school purposes. Thus there is a growing desire for playcentres to have their own premises. In the light of this modification of policy, which is already apparent in the purchase and conversion of old houses, it seems appropriate to provide for centres to develop in this direction, especially if the money-raising can be substantially reduced so as to interfere as little as possible with the parent education and participation programmes which are so much a feature of playcentre activities.

The Committee is firmly of the opinion that affiliated kindergartens and playcentres are in need of greater State support, particularly at the stage when they are being established. It can be no compelling reason to continue the two distinctive schemes of support and believes there should be one system of State assistance to accommodate both organisations. [My emphasis.] Hill Report, 1971.

The Hill Report then went on to outline several new forms of State support. The proposals included: loan finance for pre-school buildings; the use of Education Board architects to draw up plans and supervise building contracts; Departmental help with plans and subsidies on re-locatable buildings; maintenance of kindergarten and playcentre buildings, grounds and fences by Education Boards; an improved 'co-ordinated programme ... to ensure the setting aside of pre-school sites in planning new urban sub-divisions' (Ibid., p. 108); and additional assistance for establishing pre-school centres in 'areas of particular need where communities could not provide the services required' (Ibid., p. 78).

A year after the publication of the Hill Report, 1972, the Labour Party was elected and during its term, implemented

the majority of the recommendations in the Report, although many were modified after consultation between the parties concerned.

The Strategic Choice Process In October 1973 Cabinet approved a new pre-school buildings policy and in November, the Minister of Education announced that Government would provide free pre-school sites for recognised free kindergartens and playcentres and would grant buildings subsidies to playcentres. The Wellington Association President told the November Council meeting:

Provision of sites for pre-schools, both playcentre and kindergarten, will be the responsibility of the Government, and a building subsidy of \$4 to \$1 will be available. This is welcome news. However, it does not mean every playcentre will build as most are functioning satisfactorily in different types of premises. I have spent some time trying to get further details, but did not get far. However, it is fairly clear that

- (i) sites are not readily available in Wellington,
- (ii) playcentres will need to be open for six $\frac{1}{2}$ day sessions per week to qualify for the subsidy.

(Wellington Association Council minutes, November 1973)

At the February Council meeting, the Treasurer summarised for centre delegates the contents of the Departmental Circular sent to the Association. The features which were not known in November included the possibility of State Advances loans for either buildings or renovations, the criteria for areas of special need where pre-school buildings would be paid for by the Government, and pre-school buildings maintenance by Education Boards. Centre delegates were sceptical about the maintenance programme and were worried about the implications of buildings subsidies should a centre go into recess. The President said she was pleased that the buildings would be for 20 or 25 children, following recommended Federation policy of rolls being reduced to 25. (Later, members realised that there was negligible space for parent education).

The details in the Circular had not been negotiated by Federation, although the National Advisory Committee on Pre-school Education (NACPSE) had recommended such subsidies, and Government may have felt this was tantamount to a negotiated

decision. However, both the pre-school organisations agree that major policy can not be made anywhere other than their annual conferences. The lack of direct negotiation gave rise to feelings of apprehension about the relationship between the Department of Education and the playcentre organisation, but Federation leaders felt obliged to accept Government aid as it 'made the lot of local playcentres easier'.

Consequence 1: A change to the usual pattern for strategic processes involving Government funding occurred

A remit at the 1974 Federation conference, 'That Federation relay the dissatisfaction of the playcentre associations with the Circular Memorandum and attempt to re-negotiate terms', brought into the open all the festering dissatisfaction felt about the strategic choice process. A ripple of agreement occurred when a delegate said that one unnegotiated Circular Memorandum slipping through could lead to 'many things being pushed onto playcentres'. Previous Memoranda had all been negotiated. The conference agreed that Standing Committee be given power to block the implementation of unnegotiated Memoranda until they had been approved by constituent associations.

It would seem that Departmental officers were assuming that practices already operating for free kindergartens could be introduced into playcentres. Not only that, the officials (out of habit?) also began consultations regarding new assistance through Education Boards for building plans with the Kindergarten Union long before playcentre volunteers were consulted. The use of kindergarten procedures as precedents is illustrated clearly in two letters sent by the Department in July 1974:

- (a) In a letter setting out conditions for obtaining loans for playcentre buildings it was stated:

"These conditions have applied for many years to Kindergartens and have not created any difficulties."

- (b) When Federation wrote saying that the terms for loans, laid down without consultation, were unacceptable and requested negotiation, the Departmental reply was:

"As none of the usual mortgage security is required for pre-school loans, and the playcentre committees may, in some instances lack permanency, the decision was taken to limit loans to Controlling Authorities

only. This is the position with the Kindergartens and the Department considers it must also apply to Playcentres."

Thus, the pattern for buildings-aid decision-making seemed to be: 'If you want finance, then accept what kindergartens have or go without.'

Recognition was given, however, to the playcentre movement's preference for the use of community buildings. Scheme B subsidies were granted to playcentres (but not to kindergartens) so that playcentres could renovate buildings, including community buildings providing they had a 10 year tenureship.

Consequence 2: Standing committee misinterpreted constituents' wishes because consultation was foregone

It became apparent at the conference that there had been a breakdown of communication between Standing Committee and associations about the acceptability of the Circular Memorandum. Delegates were not happy with what Standing Committee had accepted, and asked that associations be circularised before any Memoranda were accepted. There was a long debate on the topic and several new motions and amendments were proposed by delegates. Such freedom indicates the reality of democratic functioning espoused by playcentre members. (By way of contrast, kindergarten conferences were generally run strictly according to formal rules of debate, which meant the issues of principle were more frequently discussed by groups sharing meals than by the whole conference).

Federation office-holders defended their actions saying that most letters and telegrams received favoured the Memorandum. Obviously, those with mixed feelings had refrained from communicating their doubts. Association and centre members welcomed the thought of their own buildings. Rented buildings (usually shared) mean physical work bringing out and packing away all equipment before and after every session. However, association leaders were worried that parents' time and energy would be diverted away from education and training tasks to buildings-related tasks, to the detriment of programme standards.

The Pre-school Staff Survey showed that many supervisors would welcome playcentre buildings. Thirty-nine per cent of the frustrations cited by supervisors were to do with job con-

ditions, and they said:

"Parents don't pull their weight. They avoid the chores at clean-up time".

(Playcentre staff interviewee)

"A lot of time is wasted setting up and stacking away".

(Playcentre staff interviewee)

Also, when asked to rank aspects of playcentre work which were most important, 22 percent ranked good physical working conditions first or second.

Consequence 3: Standardised plans do not suit playcentres' diverse needs

Playcentre members had, by conference time, realised the disadvantages of Education Board architects providing plans for buildings. Their main objections were:

- (a) Standardised plans could not cater for the diverse needs of playcentres in different areas; and
- (b) The plans did not allow space for many parent-helpers, nor for parent education gatherings.

Standing Committee was again criticised for not circularising the building brief to all associations. Conference agreed that Federation-appointed members should ask for consultation with the Department regarding plans.

Consequence 4: Local centres re-allocate resources to the detriment of the parent education programme

During the time that centre members are raising funds, planning the building, helping with renovations, decoration and laying out the outdoor area, there is an upsurge of parent commitment - both in terms of time spent and in terms of numbers of parents involved. For example, more fathers join in. However, generally this commitment of effort is to the detriment of parent education and training activities. By the time the new premises are functional, there is a shortage of trained people which often coincides with an upsurge of enrolments because of the improved accommodation.

Shortage of staff has plagued all Wellington Association playcentres with their own premises for about 5 years around and past the time of building. Few or no trainees from centres

involved in building, received certificates at Graduation ceremonies in the mid-1970s,

There were two other features associated with buildings activity and staffing difficulties. First, centres with their own buildings have a greater number of families using the centre but this seems to lessen parent motivation to train and supervise. It is easier to leave it to someone else when there are many more families enrolled. Second, centres in high SES suburbs are better able to meet the criteria for buildings subsidies, but it is these parents who are reluctant to add Playcentre Supervisors Certificate to their qualifications.

Consequence 5: Voluntary leaders were further burdened

In 1975, Wellington Association leaders were heavily burdened. Information collected to support the Federation case for training officers indicated that many association office bearers up and down New Zealand were working 40-60 hours per week for a nominal honorarium and a low mileage allowance. For example, the Wellington President in 1975 devoted time to administrative duties (including Federation-related, Association Council and Executive-related, District Pre-school Committee and liaison with other early childhood group activities); education tasks (including Training Team meetings, tutoring and leading workshops); and miscellaneous supportive and public-relations activities. The 1977 President had fewer education tasks but had additional work related to buildings - more visits to centres, phone calls, letters and reports, plus meetings with City Council staff, Education Board architects and maintenance officers, solicitors (for mortgages), Pre-school Advisers, and the Regional Office of the Department of Education personnel. The President estimated this took 6-8 hours per week for her, and two other people also contributed time.

In a few years, time and energy given by Association personnel to buildings-related tasks should diminish, as most centres who can meet the subsidy criteria will be settled into their own premises.

Conclusions The strategic choice to grant free sites and subsidies on buildings was a Labour Government decision - implementing a Hill Report (1971) recommendation. This recommendation was partly the result of earlier Federation cases, and partly the result of the Hill Committee's desire to see 'one system of State assistance'.

How did this strategic choice affect playcentres and the whole organisation? The structure of the organisation changed and buildings sub-committees were established at local, association and national levels. Building-related tasks took more resources - mostly members' time. Occasionally this meant less time was spent on other tasks. Two examples were: at meetings such as National Executive discussion about buildings curtailed the time available to consider administration and education matters, and fewer local centre members did training when their centre was involved with new buildings or re-building. Little change occurred to the programmes for either parent or child, initially, but after the centre was established, it was likely that outdoor equipment would improve. The scale of the organisation may have increased with a greater number of places being created but demographic changes have counteracted this.

Did all these changes improve the organisation's performance? The first question to be asked is "Were the users happy?" and the answer must be "Yes" once the buildings were operational. The strains diminish - those of packing away equipment, and those of maintaining harmonious relationship with landlords, particularly the reluctant ones. Wall displays and outdoor equipment also generally improve.

The second question is "Were the workers satisfied?" The answer must be mixed: some workers were and some were not. Supervisors enjoyed working in their own buildings, although they were irritated by the lack of space in purpose-built playcentres. However, association volunteers were ambivalent - they were pleased that centres were relieved of equipment storing struggles but were concerned about the threat buildings-related tasks posed to the ideology based on parents being the best educators of their own children. In addition, association and Federation office-bearers were unhappy about the increased amount of work given them by the grants.

The final question regarding the effects of the strategic choice on playcentre performance asks whether the buildings policy made playcentre available and acceptable to a wider range of young families. My contention is that it did. More places became available with Scheme A playcentres committed to opening 6 half-days per week, and several centres ran more sessions per week which suited busy mothers. Also, playcentres became more attractive to some families. Fourteen percent of the pre-school families I surveyed said they chose kindergarten because it had better facilities - a distinction that is only sometimes there now. The Pre-school Family Survey also indi-

cated that mothers with commitments beyond their family, preferred kindergartens (see Table 3.7 and p. 22). There are fewer obligations (or even expectations) for parents to participate in kindergartens, as can be seen from Table 6.4.

TABLE 6.4: MAXIMUM LEVEL OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

Pre-school Families Survey		
Maximum Involvement	Playcentre	Kindergarten
	%	%
None	-	23.0
Parent - help	46.3	39.7
Local committee or early training	25.4	27.7
Committee office or later training	26.8	9.6
Association office	1.5	-
	100.0	100.0

To sum up, both playcentre strategic choice processes discussed in this chapter created more work for more volunteers, particularly association staff. Overall the availability and the acceptability of playcentres around New Zealand was increased where centres got their own buildings. However, improved availability in Wellington may have been offset if centres had to adopt group supervision because there was an inadequate supply of supervisors trained to the higher level required from 1975 onwards. In the short term, there were some disruptions, but in the long term, these two strategic choices improved both the quality and the image of playcentre.

STRATEGIC CHOICES IN THE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

None of the strategic choice processes the kindergarten movement was involved in in the mid-1970s were dominated by the voluntary administrators, but the two decisions selected for discussion in this chapter differed in the amount of participation possible for volunteers.

- (i) The sessional grant for local kindergartens and the administrative grant to association was changed, being publicly announced by the State with little prior consultation between Government officials and Union Executive members.
- (ii) The integration of kindergarten teacher training with primary teacher training had been requested for many years by the Union, and Cabinet finally agreed to this new policy in 1974. However, Union members were not satisfied with the amount of consultation given them during the whole decision and implementation process.

THE SESSIONAL GRANT TO KINDERGARTENS AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE GRANT TO ASSOCIATIONS It is interesting to note that there is a strong parallel between the kindergarten movement receiving sessional and administrative grants when they had a case before Government for Supervising Head Teachers, and the situation described in the last chapter where playcentres were granted building subsidies when they had sought Government aid for Field Officers.

The History of the Sessional and Association Grants In 1970, a conference remit was passed requesting Government funds for offices in large associations. The Minister's reply referred the Union to the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education. The Union's submissions therefore included a recommendation: "That the Department of Education provide financial assistance to offset expenses incurred in general administration." The submissions did not explicitly propose assistance at local and association levels, but I believe this is implied in the preamble to the recommendation:

"The Union does not suggest that the State should meet all costs involved in kindergartens as this would destroy the voluntary contribution to their development which is a measure of the movement's strength, but with growing awareness of the value and insistent demand for the establishment of kindergartens, the Union considers the time has come when the State should assume some responsibility for direct running costs and administration".

"Associations act as agents for the Crown in the work of establishing kindergartens and incur heavy expenses thereby. It seems reasonable, therefore, that the Crown, as virtual owner of each kindergarten, should make some contribution towards the costs involved in its functioning.

Recommendation 4.4 in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry (1971) says "that State assistance towards the running expenses of the centre be available to any pre-school which meets the prescribed requirements" (Ibid p. 107). The rationale for such assistance is given when the Report talks of assistance to playcentres and kindergartens on a more equitable basis (Ibid p. 76). This stance was supported by the attitude of some pre-school volunteers. For example, the Union President publicly expressed envy * of the \$10,000 given to the playcentre movement for liaison work and said there was inequity in the apportioning of the pre-school vote.

The 1970 Conference passed a remit suggesting that Government should pay a per capita cost of all pre-schools' running costs. A 1971 remit was more specific. It asked that the Department should pay:

- (a) 50 percent of direct running costs with an annual capita-tion grant of \$6, and
- (b) \$100 per kindergarten to associations for administration costs.

The Minister asked the Union to wait for the Hill report, as before.

A remit seeking an association grant was carried again at the 1972 Conference, and the Director-General suggested that the Education Boards could help by undertaking some administrative tasks. Salary payments were taken over a few months later. In 1973 the President told the Educational Development Conference Working Party on Organisation and Administration that, although the volunteers expected to retain some financial involvement, more State support was needed for buildings, association administration and Union administration before the service could expand further. Note the omission of Supervising Head Teachers which was supposed to be a top priority.

* Opening address, NZFKU Conference 1971.

At the 1974 Conference administration grants for kindergartens and for associations were announced. They were very similar to playcentre administration grants. In addition, a one-off grant was given for setting up a permanent Union office in Wellington. On making the announcement, the Director of Special Duties for the Department of Education said he hoped the grant would provide the opportunity for kindergarten volunteers to formalize parental involvement in the children's sessions. No such change occurred.

Consequence 1: Equitable funding

The sessional and association administration grant did place the two major pre-school organisations on a more equitable basis. The Playcentre Federation leaders recognised this and in a press statement congratulated kindergartens on achieving a more equitable situation.

Consequence 2: Relief to the kindergarten organisation's financial resources

Some associations and some local centres were running into financial difficulties, and the new grant gave them relief. Parents were more willing to serve on committees which were not struggling. However, in the Wellington Association it could be said that the sessional grant was necessary only for the three inner-city kindergartens and then only in some years. In the past, tactics such as management advice from an Association member had solved difficulties.

With Education Boards taking over the responsibility for major maintenance of kindergarten buildings in 1974 also, the greatest expenses for local kindergartens were equipment and cleaning, and Wellington kindergartens were (with one exception) well able to pay these expenses. The combined bank balance for all the Wellington committees at the end of 1974 amounted to \$58,528. In addition, the Association had accumulated funds of over \$9500. Thus, the Wellington Association was not under severe financial pressure; nor were the majority of other associations in New Zealand, to my knowledge.

The grant was generally used to relieve the pressure on another resource; namely volunteers' time. Often the grant was used to pay a secretary to do the mechanical work, freeing the volunteers for administrative tasks. The Wellington Association felt able to move their office to well-appointed rooms.

Some associations wanted to divert a portion of the grants towards buildings but these sorts of proposals have been vetoed by the Department of Education. Rather than directly siphoning off some of the grants, therefore, some associations are now levying kindergartens each year to provide a pool of funds for establishing new kindergartens. Wellington Association has such a fund, but the 'good business practice' ethic prevails and the fund has been invested - only a small proportion is spent each year.

Consequence 3: No voluntary organisation effort to increase parent involvement in the children's session

The Director of Special Duties, when announcing the sessional and administration grants, made a plea that parents should take a greater share in the children's programme.

"Perhaps the time has arrived when there would be advantages in having a formal requirement that one or two parents should be involved as mother helpers in all sessions at all kindergartens.... The adoption of a formal roster system would establish in the minds of parents that.... they are sharing with other parents and the teachers in the carrying out of healthy programmes for their children" (Pinder, 1974)

He felt that with less fund-raising being necessary, kindergarten volunteers would have time to develop a parent education programme and extend the mother helping involvement further. More parent involvement implies formal talks to parents; but who would lead them - teachers, parents, tertiary institution lecturers or a combination? Each alternative poses distinct problems for the group addressed:

(a) Teachers

"If kindergarten teachers are to become involved in this difficult and sensitive task a great deal of thought must be put into this part of training. Is it realistic to expect girls straight from school, after two years of training, to be very successful in involving parents?" (Bell, 1974)

(b) Parents

Parents could become leaders of parent talks, but who would train them? Also, there is only a small pool of involved mothers, at present, to draw leaders from. My survey of pre-school staff showed that 35 percent of Wellington kindergartens averaged fewer than one mother

helper per session; and, similarly, twenty three percent of the parents of kindergarten children interviewed in 1974 had never been involved in any way with the kindergarten.

In the mid 1960s, Departmental officers were telling kindergarten volunteers that parents should make greater use of adult education facilities (see chapter 4). Those statements had no effect, nor had the 'carrot' of sessional grants (meant to relieve parents of the fund-raising burden). To my knowledge, the suggestion that a formal roster of parent helpers be adopted as policy has never been seriously discussed by Union decision-makers. As it took a decade for playcentre Introductory Talks to become national policy from the time it was first proposed at a conference, I do not anticipate any rapid adoption of mandatory helping in kindergartens. It would have been possible if the policy had been incorporated in the Union's Standard By-laws which were introduced at the 1975 conference for a 'trial year', then ratified in 1976.

(c) Personnel from Tertiary Institutions

Apart from University Extension lecturers, tertiary staff have traditionally had the clients come to them, rather than vice versa. Also, the content of courses has been mostly theoretical. I believe that parent education courses should, in the main, be taken to where parents are and be based largely on the family experiences of the clients to avoid parents feeling denigrated, feeling that the experts 'know best'.

Consequence 4: Compounded parent apathy

The strategy of giving sessional grants in the same year as Education Boards began maintaining kindergarten buildings seemed to dampen volunteers' enthusiasm for joining or remaining on kindergarten committees. For two or three years there was no increase in parent helping either, although this was improving by 1980 mostly because recently trained teachers have become convinced of the benefits of parent helping.

One of the reports presented at the 1976 Union conference talks of apathy - apathy about serving on committees, fund-raising or supporting the staff. Almost a quarter (23 percent) of the frustrations mentioned by pre-school volunteers interviewed in 1975 were related to parent apathy, the following quotes being typical illustrations:

"The unwillingness of people to get involved is frustrating. Only a small number of people turned up at this year's AGM".

"Committee members who don't pull their weight are frustrating".

(Volunteer interviewees)

What causes parent apathy? The report cited above suggested that a promotional campaign to give people a greater understanding of kindergarten work would improve parental involvement. I would argue that the cause of parent apathy is far more complex, and involves factors at three levels of analysis.

1. Societal

- (a) There is an increase in the number of women with pre-school aged children joining the work force. Combining work and family commitments leaves little time for voluntary work.
- (b) The kindergarten movement has to compete with an ever-increasing number of 'worthy causes'.
- (c) The general public in this country are less concerned about the need for early childhood education to help disadvantaged children than is the case in Britain and the U.S.A.
- (d) The general public often believe that kindergartens are State run. The recommendation of a promotional campaign would help to inform the public that community assistance is vital, particularly for establishing new kindergartens. It could also inform parents that participating in the children's sessions benefits both the 'kindy' and the family.

2. Organisational

- (a) Two practices - kindergarten members expecting more and more Government money; and Government giving some additional funds to fulfill the principle of equitability - have resulted in a high level of State support and control. Only minor decisions are now made entirely within the organisation (that is, without Departmental approval).

As one can see in Table 7.1 below, nearly thirty percent of the kindergarten volunteers interviewed said they gained only moderate or low satisfaction from this voluntary work.

TABLE 7.1: FELT LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF VOLUNTEERS BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Total</u>	
Very high	17	23.3	38	44.7	55	34.6
High	34	46.6	35	41.2	69	43.4
Moderate	9	26.0	11	13.0	30	18.9
Low	3	4.0	1	1.2	4	4.1
	73	100.1	85	100.0	158	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 11.18; df = 3; p < 0.05$$

The responses to a question about frustrations put to volunteers in my survey indicate that the inability to achieve objectives because others have more power is the major concern. Government bureaucratic behaviour (21 percent) and kindergarten organisation bureaucratic behaviour (13 percent) was an annoyance, particularly to local members who have little autonomy. Powerlessness was expressed when pre-school volunteers were interviewed: "I find frustrating the endless delays in the building of new kindergartens because of 'red tape' ", "The encroaching dead bureaucratic hand of the Education Department is frustrating". Parent apathy was another main frustration mentioned by 23 percent of the respondents.

What were the satisfactions which could counter-balance the concerns? The primary source was from adult companionship, whilst improving the kindergarten and/or helping in the community also proved to be rewarding. Volunteer interviewers said things like: "I gained satisfaction from working in a community group towards a common goal". However, several committee members complained to me that they attended meetings for months without getting to know their colleagues. These were usually meetings where the organiser did not recognise the value of informal discussion over a cup of tea. The new office premises for the Wellington Association meant their Council meetings were no longer hosted by the different kindergartens. No tea and no informal discussion was the unfortunate corollary.

I wanted to explore whether social and instrumental satisfactions outweighed the frustrations, and found that dissatisfaction seldom lead to resignations from kindergarten committees. With three exceptions, the dissatisfied volunteers remained on

the committee until all their children were at primary school. I suspect though that their dissatisfactions may have become public knowledge, thus dampening prospective members' interest in joining a kindergarten committee.

In sum, neither the tasks nor the style of carrying them out give present-day volunteers as much satisfaction as their predecessors; and the possibility of being more active in the parent education area has only slowly been picked up.

(b) The kindergarten leaders have a limited conception of what early childhood education is. The focus of kindergarten education is on the child, and the parental involvement in the movement is not as pervasive as leaders claim. The time of greatest involvement, viewed by the Union as critical, is when a new kindergarten is being established. Once established, only some parents are on the committee; help at the children's sessions; get to a pre-entry group; are visited in their homes by a teacher; and attend Mothers Clubs (which are mostly defunct around Wellington). Thus, parent involvement is very hit and miss; and is less likely to have impact on family life than a parent education course using a well-planned, sequential approach.

The focus on the child is, however, unwavering. The movement's motto is "He who helps the child helps humanity" (Socrates) and helping the child has been the motivating force right from the time the movement was founded. Working with children is mentioned far more often than working with parents in reports about kindergarten activities. For example, three out of the four educational aims in the submissions to the Hill committee focussed on the child; and the 1974 recruitment statement for kindergarten teachers failed to mention working with parents. It is therefore not surprising that many parents are not involved.

3. Individual

(a) Quite a number of parents believe that kindergartens are State-run (I found one local committee President saying this after she'd held office for two months!).

(b) Only some parents have the characteristics of voluntary organisation joiners. Many studies (Smith & Freedman, 1972) show that 'joiners' are generally upper or middle class, married, own a home, and have an above-average education. This is confirmed by New Zealand surveys (Vandenberg, 1965; Roth, 1971) which have found between 30-50

percent of a community's population tend not to participate in voluntary work.

Kindergarten volunteers do not seem to understand that many parents with children attending kindergarten will have neither the social participation skills nor the motivation to join a kindergarten committee. Most families ranked at level 5 or 6 on Elley-Irving's Socio-economic status scale (1972) are likely to be non-joiners, and it is not surprising therefore to find low SES suburb kindergartens having greater difficulty in maintaining a local committee. Here additional help from association members may be needed and the new association administrative grant should assist. Conversely, in high SES suburbs, many kindergarten parents with the characteristics of joiners will already be too heavily committed elsewhere to become involved in kindergarten work. Table 3.7, (p. 22), for example, shows that a relatively high proportion of kindergarten parents have high social participation scores.

The pattern of a only small proportion of parents serving on the local committee reflects a common pattern for community participation. However, I feel that there is room for concern about recruiting volunteers and having them actively participate on the Wellington Association Council. (In the smaller associations, where there is considerable integration of local committees and the association, the concern is far less applicable). The main reward for association-level voluntary work came from adult friendship but in Wellington little was done to foster this for new members. Nor were there many concrete tasks they could carry out and gain satisfaction from because:

- (i) A small group of the Wellington Executive undertook most tasks;
- (ii) Council meeting minutes were circulated too late (about 1 week before the next meeting) for a useful discussion of Association affairs at local level; and
- (iii) Adult education tasks were carried out by the Supervising Head Teacher or the Teachers College.

The Association President said that in 1974 approximately fifty percent of the Wellington local committees were "taking no part in the running of the Association" (Annual Report, 1975). The annual meeting only attracted 30 people, whereas the Wellington Playcentre Association had over 100 attend. My analysis of 1974-75 Association Council meeting attendances showed that establishment committees averaged 50 percent attendance but local committees only attended 35 percent of the time. As much

of the communication about progress on new kindergarten buildings occurred formally at these meetings (rather than informally via telephone) it is not surprising that establishment committee delegates came more regularly.

(c) More kindergarten than playcentre volunteers said they felt only a moderate or low level of satisfaction. More kindergarten volunteers joined for altruistic rather than social reasons, which is probably a reflection of the male majority - fifty-nine percent of the kindergarten volunteers in my sample were male whereas there was only 12 percent in the playcentre sample.

The majority of kindergarten volunteers said they joined the committee to be involved with their children's pre-school education, and most had expectations that they would achieve some concrete goal. However, there are very few satisfying tasks left for kindergarten volunteers because of the high level of State involvement.

Conclusions Although the Union had sought Government assistance for administrative expenses, the decision to give sessional and association grants to kindergartens was mostly the outcome of a Hill report (1971) recommendation. The Hill committee suggested that the two major pre-school organisations should be on an equitable funding basis and the Labour Government implemented this recommendation. However, I believe this policy has not been in the best interests of either organisation. All kindergartens and associations were given the grants regardless of need. This decision, coupled with the directive that Education Boards carry out major maintenance on kindergarten buildings, left volunteers with few tasks which have satisfactory 'concrete' outcomes. One intended effect of the grants - namely greater involvement in parent education activities - did not occur as a consequence of the financial assistance. Instead, recent moves to run parent education activities in the Wellington kindergartens seem to have been the result of teachers' and trainers' actions.

In terms of the theoretical framework, there was a change in the input of resources. In place of parents and volunteers giving greater amounts of time and money to ensure that kindergartens and associations ran smoothly, Government supplied funds. Given before the New Zealand economy took a downward turn and the pressures for accountability increased, the new grants were not accompanied by the introduction of new Regulations. It was simply hoped that resources given to parent

education would increase.

Within the organisation neither scale, programme nor structure were much affected by the grants, although some kindergartens' equipment would have improved, and there was some internal re-allocation of resources when some associations felt they could levy kindergartens to form an establishment fund. But there was also a noticeable change in rewards because there were fewer satisfying tasks to do. Local committee members felt frustrated by their powerlessness, but most remained loyal whilst their children attended the kindergarten. Consequently, one can predict greater recruitment difficulties in the future at all levels of the organisation.

It could be hypothesized that without the sessional grants, the voluntary donation needed in low SES suburb kindergartens may have risen beyond a manageable amount for parents. Parents get to know what they are expected to contribute (even though it is optional) and some parents may have opted out of kindergarten use because of rising expenses, if the sessional grants had not stabilized local kindergarten finances. Staff in these kindergartens found the grants a great help as they could budget confidently for equipment. Some more places may have been provided if associations re-directed money (via levies) into establishment funds. However, it is doubtful that the grants made kindergarten education available to a wider range of parents than was evident in my Pre-school Families Survey in 1973-74. No change occurred to any aspects of kindergarten functioning which are related to non-user and user parents' choice of kindergarten.

THE INTEGRATION OF KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY TEACHER TRAINING
The integration of training was a far more complex event than the grants given to kindergartens and associations to cover running costs. Much of the material about this subject presented below is based on Wellington experiences where more data was available to the writer.

The History of Integrated Training The State-kindergarten organisation partnership has been in existence since the early years of this century, with the State providing an ever-increasing proportion of resources, but not taking-over completely. However, in 1909 the Wellington Association's leaders asked the Minister of Education to integrate kindergartens into the State system. He refused but suggested that kindergarten trainers become lecturers at Teachers Training Colleges. Kindergarteners declined. The next move came in 1913, when the first Union

asked for Government paid examiners, but none were appointed.

When the Taranaki Street building - a combined training centre and kindergarten - was being planned in 1917, Government was approached for funds. A grant of £600 was proffered if Government became the owners. Again the kindergarten volunteers refused because they feared loss of autonomy. After the Union was re-established in 1926, Government endorsed kindergarten association graduates' certificates. No further Government action occurred for years, until 1941 saw the introduction of Government paid student allowances after Union leaders asked for this assistance to improve staffing. Departmental officials, from that date, determined student quotas and controlled student qualifications.

The Bailey Report of the Consultative Committee on Pre-School Education Services (1947) recommended that Government should eventually take responsibility for training kindergarten teachers. They thought this might be accomplished by:

- (a) Association training centres changing to State training centres; or
- (b) Special departments being attached to training colleges to train kindergarteners; or
- (c) Establishing independent pre-school training colleges.

None eventuated. However, in 1948 Government agreed to pay full-time lecturers' salaries and assist with the part-timers' pay. Christison (1965) reports that by 1949 Government had assumed over 90 percent of the costs of training. In consultation with the departmental Officer for Pre-school Services, a national syllabus was drawn up by the Union. All this came about with few fears about Government control being expressed, largely because of the kindergarteners' confidence in the Officer for Pre-school Services. The Campbell Report on Recruitment, Education and Training of Teachers (1951) suggested once again that kindergarten training be carried out in some teachers colleges. Despite accommodation for two of the kindergarten colleges being very inadequate in the 1950's, neither the kindergarten organisation nor the Government seriously discussed integration of training. In the late 1950s new premises were bought for the Auckland and Wellington kindergarten colleges. However, the Union Executive report to conference, 1959, stated that the ultimate aim was integration of training, so it was no surprise that the 1960 conference passed a remit asking that Government administer kindergarten colleges. The Department of

Education suggested in reply that one or two colleges should try a Regional Council of Management. As a result Wellington Kindergarten College changed from association control to Regional Council of Management control in 1965 for a pilot period. Other kindergarten colleges reconstituted their Education Committees into broader-based Boards of Studies. Both changes resulted in closer ties with teachers colleges and universities in the area - an important step towards integration.

In 1970, the Union conference sought integration, but was asked to wait for the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education. The Unions Submission to the Committee of Inquiry proposed the 'merging of the kindergarten college and Junior Section of the Teachers College', and Recommendation 7.1 in the Hill report (1971) supported this proposal:

"It is recommended that the training of pre-school teachers be carried out in special departments of primary teachers' colleges" (p. 111).

It would appear that Government decided to implement this recommendation.

The book Kindergartens in New Zealand (Lockhart, 1975) provides a succinct summary of the final events culminating in integration of primary and kindergarten teacher training.

In 1973, pre-school units were established at North Shore and Hamilton Teachers' Colleges, and in 1974 one at Palmerston North Teachers' College.

A working party on teacher training for early childhood education was held at Hogben House in May, 1974. The major tasks of the working party were:

- (a) To study the implications of the proposal to integrate the present kindergarten teacher training programme with primary teacher training, and make recommendations about the administrative and professional procedures that would be necessary to achieve this.
- (b) To consider the proposal to extend the kindergarten teacher training course by one year and make recommendations on the nature and organisation of such a course.

Consideration was also given to related issues - selection procedures, probationary year (etc) ... Teacher training resources and pre-school resources available ... were taken into account ...

Following the Hogben House working party, preparation for the integration began to proceed at local and national level ...

Planning, however, was hindered by the delay in the decision regarding staffing and the consequent advertising of the Senior Lecturer and Lecturers' positions.

In the course planning, as much integration as possible with Division A was provided for, but the particular early childhood elements ... were retained with the 2 year course ...

The unit is known as Division E - early childhood education ...

Therefore the control of the training has been transferred from the Kindergarten Associations to the Teachers' College Councils and provision has been made for representation on (this) Council. An Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Education has been established in each college and all interested parties are represented. So this integration marks the end of an era. (Ibid, pp. 109-110)

This bland reporting in no way conveys the tensions felt by many parties as a result of the way integration was finally implemented.

The Strategic Choice Process Many groups affected by the Government decision to implement integration of training were not kept informed. These included the administrators, staff and students in all the affected colleges, the Union, association volunteers who were involved with training, and the K.T.A. The Union President's opening remarks to the 1974 conference expresses the frustration felt by many people:

"... many of the changes taking shape are what we have asked for in submissions over many years - the strong objection is our non-involvement in the mechanics as to how these shall be implemented.

The worst example is the integration of kindergarten and Primary Teacher Training. We have looked forward to this for years. ... On 1st August 1973, Mr Ken Hayz, our spokesman on teacher training, asked the Minister what he had in mind for kindergarten training as we would like a definite indication ... (In November we were told that integration would take place in February 1975 - but that the Minister must make the announcement. (my emphasis) In March of this year nothing had been announced nor had

any indication been received by the Union Office, and time was running out".

(NZFKU) Annual Meeting Minutes, 1974)

The President went on to describe how she had started discussions with Kindergarten Colleges' staff because "The people most concerned were being ignored."

Later in the conference, a delegate asked the Officer for Pre-school Education whether associations would be consulted about new policies. She replied that consultation occurs when the Department has decided a new proposal seems feasible. My comment is that if Departmental resources have been devoted to evaluating a policy to ascertain its feasibility, the project must be fairly advanced before consultation begins. Because of this and because the Department is the negotiating partner with Treasury, the State-kindergarten organisation partnership is weighted heavily in the Department's favour. Not unnaturally, tension exists in the partnership and this was noticeably present during 1974 talks about integration of training.

The process of deciding the details of integration took place on two fronts after mid 1974:

- (a) The official, national process was that a Hogben House Working Party report was circulated for comment to obtain submissions about integration details; and
- (b) Simultaneously, but reaching decisions faster, were interim advisory committees meeting in various locations and making recommendations to the Department.

The 'official front' involved a wider range of groups and could be described as more democratic, but it was too slow in its actions.

January to June 1974 In November 1973 some Union members were forewarned in confidence that integration of training would happen in February 1975. By March 1974, no announcement had been made and consultations had not begun. The Union President decided to start informal discussions with kindergarten college personnel. This prompted the Wellington Kindergarten College staff to invite a Senior Inspector of Teacher Training to discuss integration with their personnel. Meantime, the Minister published a statement about integration, and left the Senior Inspector with the impression that integration would be phased in, one or two colleges at a time. Some of Wellington people

involved in training took the initiative to hold a meeting and discuss the implications. It was apparent that the Principal of Wellington Teachers College, for one, had been taken completely by surprise by the Minister's announcement. No official letters to confirm the decision were ever received by the Union, teachers colleges, kindergarten colleges or their administrative committees. The Union delayed acting by feeling offended and waiting for notification.

A working party of invited participants, met at a Hogben House in May 1974. Some participants felt that the guidelines, already written, limited the group before it ever met. However, they produced a report, "Teacher Preparation for Training Kindergarten Teachers in Primary Teachers Colleges", which was stamped 'Draft' and 'Confidential' and circulated to selected people for comment. This 'Confidential' stamp was to cause delays - many chairmen of early childhood committees felt the copies were for their eyes only.

July 1974 to January 1975: The Official Strategic Choice Process By July, most people concerned with integration of training had received the Working Party report but, if permission to give the 'confidential' report to the whole committee was sought, there were delays in returning comments by July 31. Then the official process entailed the Department, on the basis of submissions, re-formulating the guidelines for teachers colleges to develop their courses. The courses were to be approved by Teachers College Councils, then sent to the Director-General of Education for final approval. All parties other than from teachers college personnel were seemingly excluded from decision-making after commenting on the Working Party report. The Union said this at the August 1974 meeting of NACPSE. Kindergarten members were worried that the Union would have no representatives on teachers college administrative committees.

July 1974 to January 1975: The Less Official Strategic Choice Process (Wellington Activities) In July, with only six months remaining, the Wellington Teachers College Council proposed an interim advisory committee in favour of the deputation to the Minister of Education mooted by other concerned parties. The interim committee set up was given direct access to the Teachers College Council and had wide representation from all interested groups. This committee, like the Regional Council of Management, was held up waiting for the Department of Education to agree to all members reading the 'confidential' Working Party report. However, from the first meeting of the Wellington Interim Advisory Committee recommendations about student quotas,

selection committee membership, the length of the training course and the number and status of lecturers were sent to the Department of Education.

Ten days later, at the next meeting, some of the recommendations had been approved by Departmental officials, and there was clarification that the course length would definitely be two years. Recommendations about lecturers were formulated. The Union representative came out strongly for the protection of existing kindergarten lecturers - a continuing concern of the Union. The students' main concern all over New Zealand was loss of identity and course changes towards what they felt were less desirable emphases.

After one month of weekly meetings, the Wellington interim committee had moved on to discussing the curriculum and less urgent matters. Most of the more urgent details had been dealt with by the Department of Education without waiting for the revised Working Party report. Wellington early childhood personnel were happier with progress compared with people in other centres who were hampered by slower communication methods and the 'confidential' stamp. Many of the Departmental circulars on integration reflected the Wellington committee's thinking.

The refusal by Treasury to appoint the Senior Lecturers (Early Childhood) for the whole third term dismayed all parties. The reason given was that the Education Services Committee had to negotiate a new salary scale; a scale which many found denigrating when it was gazetted. The senior appointments were made in late October.

The Union persistently sought representation on Teachers College Councils around New Zealand. The 1974 amendment to the Education Act only indirectly allowed such representation. The clause in the Act used for Union and KTA representation reads: "One member or more as the Minister may determine to be appointed by the Minister on the joint nomination of such bodies representative of the interests of pre-school education." The other main concern of the Union Executive was for the kindergarten lecturers who were under considerable stress waiting for the new appointments to be announced. This did not happen until early December. A safeguards committee of Union, KTA and departmental personnel was set up in mid-December on behalf of those kindergarten lecturers who did not gain Teachers College lectureships. It negotiated a protected salary for two years, and the chance

to attend courses to raise their personal qualifications.

After some lobbying the Minister of Education agreed that each college should have an Early Childhood Advisory Committee to the Teachers College Council. The Wellington interim committee was modified in membership and then officially recognised with new, on-going functions.

Thus, by February 1975, the goal of integration had been accomplished. Many kindergarten people said that it should have been a happy occasion, but the rush and the lack of consideration for the people involved took the edge off the pleasure. Only a handful of kindergarten volunteers remain involved in training tasks as gate-keepers between their own organisations and teachers colleges.

This strategic choice was long sought after and, once the decision was made, many implementation details had to be worked out in rather too much of a hurry. In the next section, I propose to return to the free kindergarten organisation and examine the effects of the decision on its structure and functioning.

Consequence 1: The role of volunteer workers changed in the training sub-system of the kindergarten organisation

Kindergarten volunteers have virtually handed over all training tasks to teachers colleges; only a few volunteers now do training tasks and it is usually administrative work. As one individual on a largish committee, each Union representative has little power but the Union has been able to wield corporate power on at least one occasion (when a playcentre representative on the Advisory Committees was mooted).

Consequence 2: A surplus of kindergarten teachers happened

The Hogben House Working Party had been set two major tasks: to study the proposal to integrate primary and kindergarten teacher training, and to consider the proposal that kindergarten training be extended to a three-year course. Only the first proposal was implemented by Government, although most groups in the field recommended implementing longer training. Early childhood units were set up at North Shore and Hamilton Teachers Colleges in 1973 and at Palmerston North Teachers

College in 1974. As the same quota of students at existing kindergarten colleges was maintained, it would seem that the increased numbers of kindergarten teachers in 1975-78 was planned. The increase was compounded by an higher than usual retention rate of kindergarten teachers.

To ensure job placement for these additional teachers, one or more of the following strategies could have been employed:

1. The introduction of three year training;
2. A boost in the kindergarten building programme;
3. Allowing free kindergartens to open in community buildings;
4. An improvement in the ratio of teachers to children;
5. Employing kindergarten teachers in a greater variety of jobs; and/or
6. Reducing student quotas.

In 1975/76, none of the strategies were adopted on a large enough scale to absorb most of the surplus kindergarten teachers. In May 1976 there were 150 supernumeraries* in the service with hundreds more due to graduate at the end of the year. The first tactic to use up the surplus was new Regulations penalizing women wishing to re-enter the kindergarten work force. The NZFKTA conference, irritated by the lack of consultation and concerned about the effect of fewer mature women in the service, agreed to boycott vacancies. This Regulation was later rescinded.

Let us examine each of the above strategies in turn.

1. Three Year Training Despite recommendations in favour of this from the Hogben House Working Party (1974) and most interested bodies, Government agreement still seems a long way off. I believe the main factor hindering implementation is an economic one, but there are also doubts about the added value of three year training and uncertainty about the timing of the third year (a third year end-on or after a year's teaching service).

* Teachers paid by the Department, but having no permanent appointment.

2. An Increase in the Building Programme Many measures were introduced in the mid-1970s which were expected to speed up the building programme (free sites, improved subsidies, the use of Education Board architects and buildings maintenance). These tactics were designed to change the source of resources (from volunteers to Government), and thus encourage growth. However, the greater complexity of procedures and a limit on subsidy money constrained growth to the same level as the 1960s - that is, to about 20 new kindergartens annually - during the mid-1970s.

The Officer for Pre-school Education told the 1974 Union conference that building programmes had become more complex. The flow chart for primary schools contained in Organisation and Administration of Education (1974) indicates the complexity involved (see Figure 7.1). With kindergartens, the pre-school organisations are also involved, and there are many additional steps to be taken before a kindergarten is included in the year's capital works programme and placed at the beginning of the flow chart. Delays are compounded when funds are short. For example, in 1976-77 only \$55,000 was available for pre-school land purchase in New Zealand - enough to purchase about six city sites! The improved subsidies announced in 1973 stimulated demands which were difficult to satisfy later in the decade when the economy had gone into recession. Treasury did agree in 1977/78 to clear the back-log and allow all kindergartens ready to build to proceed.

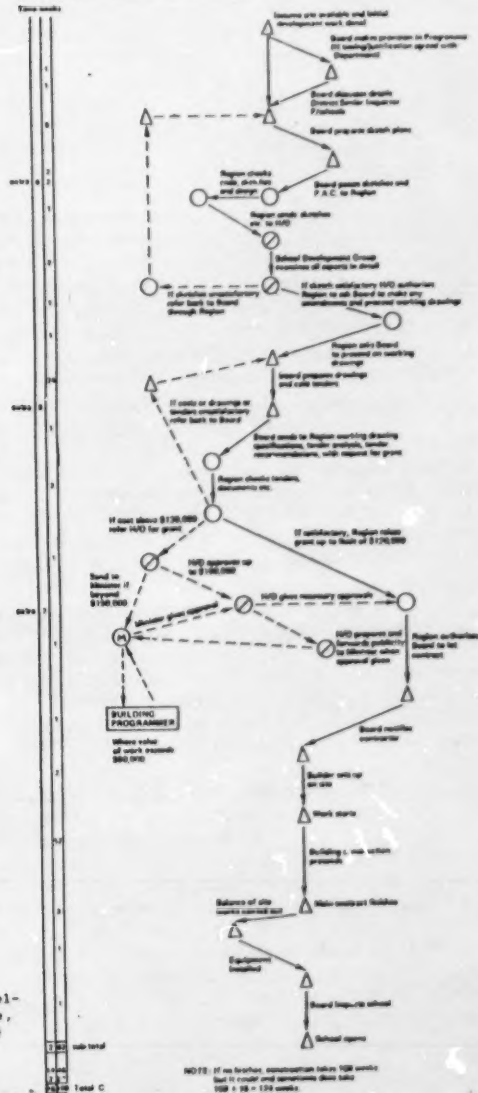
The whole complex process for pre-school buildings is under review and hopefully will be simplified before too long. But this will only increase the growth rate and absorb more of the surplus teachers, if the Department and Treasury continue to budget for more buildings and, with demographic changes resulting in fewer pre-school children in the 1980s, this cannot necessarily be justified.

3. Allow Kindergartens to Operate in Community Buildings. This strategy, suggested by the NZFKTA and requiring a change in Regulations, would have pervasive effects on organisational functioning as well as on the relationship between the kindergarten movement and other organisations in the environment. Aspects of the programme may change - for example, group size, opening times and/or equipment may vary more. Kindergarten staff and volunteers would have new liaison tasks with the owners of community buildings. The approach to client families would be altered. Demand could be met sooner, but kindergartens may be less attractive without purpose-built buildings,

FIGURE 7.1: FLOW CHART FOR BUILDING SCHOOLS

This flow chart illustrates the typical stages in processing a proposal to build a primary school classroom block, not comprehensive enough to meet County Board Committee approval at each stage, but not covered by a previous plan. The conditions for site acquisition and for secondary buildings, are seen more complicated.

Young workers



(Educational Development Conference, 1974, pp. 128-129)

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possibly with fewer sessions and with parents needing to help stack away more equipment.

The difference between the playcentre and kindergarten services would be narrowed which could well heighten the competitiveness between free kindergarten and other pre-school services. Hirschman (1970) says that loyalty to the organisation has a positive role to play when organisations are close substitutes: "The more (two organisations resemble each other) the more irrational and outright silly does stubborn organisational loyalty look; yet that is precisely when it is most useful". (Ibid, p. 81). Kindergartens in community accommodation may decrease their popularity and may need to rely more on member loyalty than exists today.

4. Improve the Ratio of Teachers to Children. When student observers counted the adults working with children in 10 kindergartens and 9 playcentres mid-way through two different sessions at each type of pre-school, they found a marked difference in the ratio of adults to children. (See Table 4.1, p. 37). During kindergarten sessions when there were only two adults present and one was required to see an administrative task, there was one adult to forty children.

The poor ratios was one of the two major frustrations (cited 30 percent of all the frustrations mentioned) felt by Wellington kindergarten teachers. It was, therefore, no surprise when the 1976 KTA conference passed a remit calling for three teachers to 80 children. (In 1980, now the demand for places has declined, KTA is asked for 3 teachers to 60 children). The teachers believe effective kindergarten teaching requires a close knowledge of each child's development and needs, and that this is not possible for large numbers of children per week.

Late in 1976 the Minister of Education made an announcement which the teachers' union had been resisting - namely that additional staff would be appointed to kindergartens where staff and the association had agreed to accept an additional group of children. However, this strategy absorbed only some of the surplus and other strategies did, in fact, improve the

ratio of teachers to children, but only whilst there are supernumeraries.

5. Employing Teachers in a Wider Variety of Jobs. A range of different jobs for kindergarten teachers come to mind: employing teachers in child care centres; having more Supervising Head Teachers; employing teachers to work in the community; having more Pre-school Advisers; employing kindergarten teachers instead of primary teachers to work with young handicapped children. A variety of new policies may be necessary to mop up the surplus. Many of these tactics would affect other groups in the environment and may need internal changes for the movement.

- (a) Kindergarten teachers employed in child care centres would need a change in child care salaries and should be associated with a modified training scheme, or a 'topping up' module on child care work.
- (b) More Supervising Head Teachers should improve the children's programme, and may produce an amalgamation of some small associations.
- (c) If kindergarten teachers were to work in the community the approach to families would alter from the traditional approach where families come to the teachers.

Let us assume that there is expansion in new directions in the field. Should the kindergarten movement not be the employer of kindergarten teachers who are employed as child care or community workers, then I foresee that the sphere of influence of the kindergarten organisation may further diminish. The employer decision will have important long-term implications in the field of early childhood care and education. The Union Executive has repeatedly said that they regard child care as being outside their realm of interest because of their philosophical belief in the child being mostly at home until she/he begins school, so it is unlikely that they would wish to be the employers of teachers who work in child care centres.

It was apparent in 1976 that the time was ripe to establish a network of community pre-school workers. The question was: to whom should they be attached? By late 1978, 28 full-time positions for Community Pre-school Workers had been created, filled by approximately 45 women sharing the positions. They work to Pre-school Advisers and are paid as teachers aides.

This approach - working in family homes - is proving to be very successful, but has not provided employment for any kindergarten teachers.

6. **Reduced Student Quotas** With an economic recession persisting and a zero population growth rate achieved in the late 1970s. Reduced student quotas were introduced for the 1977 intake. In some colleges, the quotas were not been filled because of the insecurity about employment at the completion of training, thus contributing to the perpetuation of this policy.

Of all the possible solutions to the over-supply of kindergarten teachers, two strategies were implemented. In late 1976 the Minister announced that an extra teacher would be appointed to those kindergartens which agreed to have an additional 40 children - 57 kindergartens agreed. Growth was deemed most important. The majority of the surplus graduates were absorbed by being attached to those kindergartens with the longest waiting lists over the whole country. At the end of 1977 another set of strategies was devised for employing that year's graduates. Supernumeraries were placed in kindergartens which could make the 'best use of an additional teacher': for example, kindergartens with new head-teachers, with a high turnover, with special groups in new housing areas, or which met some of the characteristics of 'special needs' kindergartens.

These policies fit Lindblom's model (1964) of 'muddling through'. There were tugs between bureaucratic and professional objectives which detracted from finding the optimum solution and 'satisficing' took place. As Simon (1957) somewhat wryly comments "the key to the simplification of the choice process... is the replacement of the goal of maximising with the goal of satisficing, of finding a course of action that is 'good enough' ". (p. 204).

Consequence 3: Changed training conditions

One Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education described the improvements thus:

"Advantages have been in sharing all the Teachers Colleges facilities, because we must be honest and admit that the Kindergarten College facilities had their limitations. More specialist staff are available and thus a wider range of selected studies plus increased breadth and

depth of study. It is good to see student enjoyment of the choice of selected studies.

To be a member of a larger staff and experience wider professional contacts within the College itself is a stimulation and support."

(Varcoe, 1975, p. 2)

The sheer size of teachers colleges has resulted in two noticeable differences for staff and students. Firstly, the intimate and informal relationships of kindergarten colleges are less apparent and one wonders whether this will be reflected in more formal teacher-child relationships in kindergartens. Secondly, the greater bureaucratic inflexibility of large institutions can mean optimum opportunities are passed over because of, for example, timetabling difficulties. Kanter's study of the 'organisation child' (1972) indicates that bureaucratic features are found in nursery schools. He found that "a people-processing organisation ... anxious to provide the 'right kind' of experience for its children, may unintentionally establish bureaucratic conditions to do so" (Ibid, p. 196). One wonders whether the training experience of staff has any bearing on this. If so, I would predict an increase in bureaucratization of kindergarten programmes in future years.

The pre-school staff surveyed frequently mentioned three weaknesses in kindergarten college training: too much wasted time, too little information given about children with special needs and too little practical training. Integration of training has only improved the use of time according to senior personnel involved with kindergarten teacher training. Staff during the survey praised the quality of kindergarten lecturers' work and this has been maintained with most kindergarten lecturers winning teachers college appointments.

Consequence 4: Improved status for kindergarten staff

Partly because of integration, kindergarten students and teachers achieved salaries closer to primary students and teachers. This has raised kindergarten teachers' status quite considerably, although most kindergarten personnel feel that true equality of status will not be achieved until three-year training is implemented. Kindergarten lecturers also gained in status and salary, but it was regarded with suspicion that a lower step on the teachers college salary scale was introduced at the time when teachers college kindergarten lectureships were first being advertised.

Conclusions Almost from the time when training centres for Kindergarten teachers were first established, kindergarten teachers were first established, kindergarten volunteers have (at intervals) pressed Government to take over the training. It was indicated in late 1973 that Government would implement this strategy at the beginning of 1975. As the official mechanisms for deciding upon tactics were deemed too slow and lacking in consideration for the people involved, ad hoc committees were set up to recommend the details of integrated training. This speeded up decision-making and gave the Wellington interim committee at least, satisfactory participation in the decision-making process. The question remains: who benefitted most from integration - people in the organisation and/or families with pre-schoolers?

a. The organisation The scale of the movement was little affected by the structural change of training being undertaken by teachers colleges. Undoubtedly, the main benefits were related to resources. Staff gained improved salaries and status. The teachers colleges had more equipment and a greater variety of specialist lecturers to enrich the training. Kindergarten volunteers at national level and in associations adjacent to training centres were definitely relieved of a good deal of responsibility - their efforts were no longer of critical importance.

b. Families with pre-school aged children Whether the changed training has resulted in an improved programme for the children and greater parent involvement (believed important for effective early childhood education) is a moot point. It can be argued that greater professionalisation of staff could have an off-putting effect on parent participation. On the other hand, if teachers feel secure about the improved teacher to children ratio, they may find time to implement schemes for having more parent helpers during the children's sessions. Hedges (1974) found that when volunteer helpers were present, the amount of adult time spent with individual pupils was more than tripled. Not only could the helpers work with individual children, but the teachers mode of working changed - they spent nearly twice as much time with individual children and doing things which early childhood educators rank as important activities.

The teachers argue for an improved ratio before they can organise an effective parent participation scheme. Voluntary administrators wonder whether parents will be less inclined to offer help if there is an improved ratio. However, the play-

centre movement indicates that the ratio is not an influential variable for parent involvement. Planning, making parents feel valued and introducing some rewards and/or sanctions are more influential.

In this study, an important question asked after each strategic choice process has been evaluated is: has the decision meant that a wider range of social groups receive early childhood education? With kindergarten teacher training occurring in teachers colleges, more people may believe that kindergartens are State run. However, most parents can perceive that kindergartens differ from State schools as they know that there is not universal kindergarten education and that a donation is expected. The decision to integrate training in no way overcame the barriers to low SES families attendance: money, transport, waiting lists and hours that do not match work hours. Thus, I doubt whether any new groups of families received early childhood education as a consequence of the integration of training.

THE PARTNERSHIPS - A CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This book contains two case studies of organisations, focussing on how people actually go about making decisions, in this case, decisions affecting the availability of pre-school education services in New Zealand, and decisions affecting the acceptability of those services. A review of the historical patterns of decision-making was followed by a detailed analysis of four decisions made in the mid-1970s. Through these analyses, it has been possible to isolate some factors which repeatedly influenced decision-makers in their choice of strategies. The approach also allowed me to illustrate the complexities of implementing strategic choices. In this chapter, I want to draw together the common themes that were revealed. The conclusions to Chapters 6 and 7 show that the strategic choices analysed in this study usually brought outcomes that were satisfactory for the majority of the personnel within the two organisations, but they seldom improved the availability and acceptability of the services to social groups who were not already using pre-schools. Changing social conditions and the growth of other forms of early childhood education indicate that the playcentre and free kindergarten movements and the Government need to consider whether they should maintain the prevailing pattern of provision. I would suggest that by the late 1970s the focus on growth needed to shift to a focus on diversification, and some decisions to shift a small amount of resources to alternative groups have been made.

Characteristics of the Pre-school Voluntary Organisations There is a distinguishing pattern of organisation and administration for each movement. Elsewhere (Meade, 1978), I described in general terms these patterns thus:

The playcentre movement is like a large, untidy, extended family. It is like an extended family because all members of the child's family are welcome - siblings, both parents, grandparents can all join in. It is like a family because organisational members have certain role obligations but are willing and able to perform other role obligations should the need arise, just as family members co-operate. It is like a family too in that members fulfil family functions such as child care and visiting one another, far more than do kindergarten members.

The playcentre movement is untidy because the 'parents' of the movement have not been very strict and uncompromising about how 'off-spring' playcentres should be

accommodated, when they can be active, who will supervise them and so on.

However, the children's and adults' programmes are controlled by inculcating an ideology using subtle, but affectionate means. The affection shows itself in ways commonly seen in warm, family relationships - members are greeted warmly, often with physical contact, and made to feel part of the group; and members enjoy joint activities, be it work or 'play' activities, and enhance the enjoyment by adding large measures of laughter. The strength of the playcentre organisation lies in its untidiness, because the untidiness is indicative of an effective communication network which has little need of formal measures to ensure that the organisation functions smoothly. This method of operating can break down when distance makes communication difficult. Six out of the nine playcentres that went into recess in 1974-75 were in isolated rural areas and faced waning numbers and difficult communication.

Facilitating association-playcentre communication is one of the most important uses for any increase in money resources. The movement's leadership recognises this, but the Government has derived new policies from Hill report recommendations or agreed to new policies (which) can show efficient use of public money. Money spent on support work is difficult to account for.

The kindergarten movement is a complex organisation which has become more and more bureaucratised each time the Government has granted new funds. It is now characterised by rules; expectations of obedience of these rules; and formal communication between most members. Despite the complexity of the organisation arising from the number of social systems, the movement is comparatively tidy. It is tidy because the large majority of kindergartens offer a standardized service no matter what special community characteristics prevail. * (p. 116)

The playcentre movements could be classified as an 'integrated' voluntary organisation whilst the free kindergarten movement is a 'differentiated' organisation on a simple schema which looks like this:

FIGURE 8.1: ORGANISATIONAL TYPES

	Integrated Organisation	Differentiated Organisation
<u>Structure</u>	A single social system	Several social structures (sub-systems)
<u>Functioning</u>	Members tackle most types of task over Members can influence decisions in all areas and levels of activity	Members mostly perform specialised tasks Members can influence decisions only in their own sub-system, although they may be constrained by strategic choices made by members of other sub-systems.

For integrated voluntary organisations there is one hierarchy and many members tackle a variety tasks. Members are more likely to share common goals and a common ideology because of their varied tasks, and because groups are frequently in contact and/or have members in common. The communication network spreads in all directions and is mostly informal (even along vertical lines where most organisations increase formality). With effective informal lines of communication and a common ideology, there is less need for formal statements about preferred behaviour, or for formal sanctions. Should the ideology include a belief in democratic functioning, it is likely that policy changes will be made at a conference of constituent representatives. The more often shared decision-making is practised, the more members will act upon decisions made via democratic processes only. Conversely, when there is shared (democratic) decision-making, members are more willing to carry the decisions out.

With only one hierarchy and members tackling many tasks, it is less appropriate for an outside agency to tag funds for specific purposes than would be the case for an organisation with specialist sub-systems. The funding agency usually expects the organisation to show that it has spent the money properly, and it is easier to do this with products than with processes, or for specialist tasks in the case of processes. There is a real danger that playcentre organisational integration will be threatened by the drive for accountability in the education sector.

The playcentre movement fits into the integrated voluntary organisation class because:

1. It has only one social system
2. The same individuals hold several varied positions either concurrently or consecutively; for example, rostered parent helper, tutor to trainees and centre president. A majority of the playcentre volunteers in my Pre-school Volunteers Survey had had wide experience.

TABLE 8.1: NUMBER OF LOCAL POSITIONS HELD BY VOLUNTEERS, BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Playcentre		Kindergarten		Total	
		%		%		%
1 job (position)	37	43.0	50	68.5	87	54.4
2 jobs	30	35.0	16	21.9	47	29.3
3 or more jobs	19	22.0	7	9.6	26	16.3
	86	100.0	73	100.0	160	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 11.61, df = 2; p < 0.01$$

TABLE 8.2: NUMBER OF ASSOCIATION POSITIONS HELD BY VOLUNTEERS, BY PRE-SCHOOL AFFILIATION

	Playcentre		Kindergarten		Total	
		%		%		%
1 job (position)	13	43.3	17	60.7	30	51.7
2 jobs	10	33.3	9	32.1	19	32.8
3 or more jobs	7	23.3	2	7.1	9	15.5
	30	99.9	28	99.9	58	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 3.30; df = 2; p < 0.05$$

3. Because individuals are not trained or socialized exclusively into one specialized position in the organisation, all office holders in different positions share common goals and beliefs.
4. All members are seen having rights and obligations in decision-making processes. It is not possible to exclude groups on the grounds that they are not entitled or knowledgeable enough to vote. National decisions about both administrative and educational matters are made by one group - Federation conference - made up of representatives

from all associations. Association 'ways and means' decisions about administrative and educational matters are made at Association Council meetings of centre representatives. The main arena for making strategic choices is the association - which facilitates wide participation.

5. The structural features resulting in a coherent social system are reinforced by the playcentre ideological belief in parents having maximum involvement in their children's early childhood education. This belief dissuades leaders from moving towards more authoritarian decision-making in the name of efficiency.
6. Ordinary members can influence decision-making at all levels - witness the influence of association representatives (most of whom are also involved with local centres) on buildings subsidies negotiations. If an association strongly disagrees with a strategic choice made by the Government-playcentre partnership, it may choose not to implement it or to implement it in a different way; but with internal policy, the matter will be held over until a national consensus is reached. Such events indicate considerable power at association and local levels.
7. With a large number of members being involved in decision-making processes, the decisions are more subject to constant pressure for amendment.

For differentiated voluntary organisations there are two or more sub-systems the most common differentiation being between the voluntary administrative sub-system and the paid 'professional' sub-system. In each sub-system, members are more likely to tackle specialized tasks. Few members are involved in more than one sub-system except to represent the group they work with most. Messages via such 'gatekeepers' are the main form of horizontal communication, apart from written letters and circulars. Most communication flows vertically within a sub-system and diagonal communication between different levels of the different sub-systems is rare. Members can have direct influence only on decisions about their own sub-system, although they may be constrained by decisions made in (and only occasionally negotiated with) other sub-systems. It can be seen that the representative (gatekeeper) has considerable influence over the level of integration within organisations. Distinctive goals and values tend to develop for each sub-system which may increase the cohesion of, say, the professionals, but will increase the gap between them and members of other sub-systems such as the volunteers. Where priorities differ, bargaining or the punishment of deviants may be necessary to gain 'co-operation' from

other groups.

Because sub-systems specialise in different tasks, funding can be given for specific purposes, often without directly affecting other sub-systems. However, as all the groups in an organisation are interacting, any additional input of resources tends to affect all sub-systems.

The kindergarten movement fits into the differentiated voluntary organisation class because:

1. It has several sub-systems: the administrative sub-system of volunteers; the Mothers' Clubs; the Kindergarten Teachers' Association; and the new training set-up which, at the time of writing, could be better described belonging to the tertiary education system.
2. On the whole, each sub-system has different members doing specialized tasks but some mothers belong to the Mother's Club and the local committee, and supervising Head Teachers usually belong to both the KTA membership and the voluntary administrative sub-system.
3. The Union hierarchy, the KTA and the Mothers' Clubs have goals and value systems which overlap but also have goals and values distinctive for each.
4. The Union-association sub-system and the KTA sub-system each has its own mode of decision-making and, because of different values, is likely to make some decisions which constrain the other sub-system. This does little to promote cohesion in the whole organisation. However, when the Government partner makes decisions which all kindergarten personnel are not satisfied with, the Union and KTA will usually unite to improve the details of the decision.
5. The area of decision-making where there is an overlap of interest is the children's programme. The associations are the employing authorities, and the Union and some associations were responsible for overseeing most kindergarten training until 1975; therefore the Union sub-system makes many decisions about programmes. The teachers (and therefore KTA) are daily concerned with the educational programme for children. Their policies do not necessarily coincide with the voluntary administrators; an example being the difference of opinion over the effects of extended rolls in the mid-1970s.
6. Involvement of a wide range of members in decision-making has no strong ideological reinforcement in the kindergarten movement. By default, kindergarten volunteers have tended

to allow their leaders to do most of the decision-making, and the Government partner (in negotiation) has gradually decreased the areas where voluntary members can make decisions.

7. The result is a tendency towards oligarchy which is reinforced by:

- (a) Posting minutes of meetings out to lower level groups at a date too late for full local discussions of proposals to take place before the next higher-level meeting.
- (b) Writing very brief minutes and preparing circulars only infrequently so that members are poorly informed.
- (c) An authoritarian leadership style which does not foster lower-level members' involvement in decision-making, rather it encourages 'rubber stamping'.
- (d) Associations need to attend Ward meetings to acquire sufficient knowledge about conference agenda items to discuss them knowledgeably. However, larger associations are more likely to send representatives to Ward meetings than are one- or two-kindergartens so small associations (the majority) tend to be less well-informed prior to conference. Similarly, in larger associations, many local committees do not regularly send a representative to Association Council meetings and have little communication between meetings. The poor attendance at Wellington Association Council meetings led the Wellington Association to decrease the number of meetings in 1973, thus lessening the opportunities for participation by local members.

In sum, the real arenas for decision-making for most of the year are the executive bodies at national and association levels, with major policy matters reserved for conference agreement.

8. Kindergarten decisions tend to be formalized as 'By-laws'. Members may have to spend much time on background documentation, lobbying and so on to achieve a majority vote needed to change the rules.

Organisational 'tidyness' It would seem that one indicator of untidyness in an organisation is the relative lack of rules and Regulations. Kindergarten history is characterised by kindergarten volunteers asking for more resources from the Government and when the Government has agreed more Regulations are intro-

duced to ensure accountability and to produce nation-wide uniformity; whereas playcentre history shows volunteers insisting that parents be involved in all administrative and educational tasks and resisting any strategic choices which would have contradicted this. The result is few regulations. In addition, the playcentre organisation has far fewer internally made rules. There are guidelines in the introductory booklets and I Play and I Grow (1970), however, which are reinforced informally by all the 'old hands'. The informal socialization into 'the playcentre way' is generally very effective but it does mean that the movement is not adapting its values in the way some members and some of the general public may hope for. For example, payment of supervisors at market rates, desired by a few, continues to be resisted by the majority of members. The ideological belief in, and practice of, parental involvement in all its activities, is very resistant to change, and this resistance is not because of a proliferation of rules.

The kindergarten organisation is 'tidy' largely because of the Regulations and the Union Standard By-laws. At the 1975 conference, the Union Executive (after circulating a few copies at Ward meetings) introduced the Standard By-laws for the whole of New Zealand to 'tidy up' the movement. They replaced all the separate association sets of by-laws. The conference participants were not allowed to debate the By-laws until associations had tried them for a year and then they were told they were confirmed policy! The greater uniformity made teacher movement between associations less complicated, but associations are less able to be innovative in response to local needs.

The Voluntary Organisation - Government Partnerships In 1977 approximately 70 percent of the Kindergarten Union conference remits were directed at Government. This indicates the extent of interdependence between the kindergarten movement and the State. By way of contrast only 33 percent of Playcentre Federation conference remits sought aid from Government. The earlier chapters show that the amount of contact between the Government and voluntary organisations is partly a product of the age of the organisation, and, in addition, of how strong the organisation believes in remaining autonomous in its decision-making.

The nature of the contact is affected by the special features of early childhood education which distinguish it from other services for which Government takes responsibility:

"First, there is no compulsory element as in the case of education within the statutory age limits. Second,

there is no obvious general need as in the case of health services. Third, there is no direct need connection with individual and familiar socio-economic level as in the case of most social welfare services. Early childhood care and education may consequently be treated as an extra, something that should be provided by voluntary effort on the part of those who want it." (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1977, p. 42)

Jill Savage (1974) has made a comparison of Government-voluntary organisation and male-female partnerships. She says that both the role of voluntary workers and the role of women are vaguely defined and the incumbents' work is unpaid and undervalued. She attributes the voluntary workers' efforts in fund-raising and women returning to paid work as these groups' desire to do something which is of measureable value.

Playcentre has been more assertive on occasions, and some or all associations have refused to accept Government decisions. I believe they are able to do this because the contributions from playcentre volunteers are more indispensable than are Government contributions. The reverse is true in the case of the kindergarten-Government partnership. There are other differences apparent too. Therefore it would be a mistake to generalize from one partnership to the other. Playcentre people do all aspects of playcentre work; whereas the Government is responsible for some aspects of the kindergarten service, for example, the training of teachers. Assistance given by Government is usually what the kindergarten movement needed and has actively sought; but there have been instances where the input from the Government into the playcentre movement has not matched needs nor the main goals. Based on the principle of equitable help for both pre-school movements, the inputs had the effect of inhibiting flexibility of delivery and threatening some features of the movement. There is more consultation with the kindergarten partner by Government than with the playcentre partner, on the whole, although in the mid-1970s kindergarten leaders were complaining about poor consultation (again about decisions made by Government in the name of equitable provision). Where this happens, a lack of trust and tension grows between partners as the volunteers feel that Government officials are implying they lack policy-making skills.

Patterns Emerging from Playcentre Strategic Choice Processes

1. Usually many playcentre members are consulted about proposed changes. If, however, a decision is

made by a small group only, lower level members object and usually insist on a thorough discussion. Generally they effect change to the proposal.

2. The high level of integration of the playcentre organisation and a belief in parent participation in decision-making means that the ordinary member's voice is deemed legitimate and is, therefore, listened to.
3. Playcentre leaders are loathe to accept funds which might lessen the amount of parent participation in the educational programmes (adults and childrens), thus threatening the co-operative nature of the organisation.
4. The strategic choices did improve the performances of the playcentre organisation in the way the decision-makers hoped for - the quality of the programme and the accommodation was improved, and the burden on some mother-helpers was lightened.
5. Both strategic choices discussed in Chapter 6 lessened the flexibility of the movement. Playcentres with new buildings will have to strive to keep rolls up, and Wellington centres are less able to use supervisors with other teaching qualifications.

Patterns Emerging from Kindergarten Strategic Choice Processes

1. The norm is to expect that Government will provide resources to relieve any pressure on the kindergarten organisation. The lower level member's task is to draw their leaders' attention (via conference remits) to pressure points.
2. The impetus for Government action appeared to come less from kindergarten volunteers' requests and more from the Government's commitment to implementing the Hill committee's recommendations.
3. Kindergarten leaders were less trusting of the Government partner after if had thrust one or two decisions upon them without adequate consultation.
4. Kindergarten volunteers felt obliged to accept strategic choice processes made by Government. This is related to the unequal nature of the partnership, to members finding the channels for communication inappropriate for voicing dissatisfaction, and to their not wanting 'to bite the hand that feeds them'.
5. Both the strategic choices described in Chapter 7 decreased the degree of participation for members of the kindergarten movement. Sessional grants meant less fund-raising, and

integration of training removed training tasks. Few parents now get involved; on the other hand, fewer volunteers feel overburdened by the kindergarten activities.

6. The kindergarten movement seems to accept Government decisions with fewer questions than other pre-school groups.

Patterns Emerging from all of the Strategic Choice Processes

1. Many problems required tactical changes in more than one area to solve them. When a decision was made to change one thing but not the other, an imbalance was created which usually caused tensions. For example, the decision to raise standards of supervision in the Wellington Playcentre Association was not accompanied by a decision to cross-credit other educational/teaching qualifications. Much criticism was expressed about this, but no cross-crediting has yet been introduced. The sessional grants to kindergartens were not accompanied by changes to parent involvement in parent education schemes, so volunteers find they have few tasks left them. The decision to integrate training but not to introduce a three year course contributed to an oversupply of kindergarten teachers.
2. All of the strategic choices brought consequences which were unforeseen by the decision-makers in the movements. The improved standards of playcentre supervision depleted the supply of potential association leaders and stimulated a demand for cross-crediting. The sites and building grants for playcentres led to specialization within the movement with some members concentrating on buildings. The sessional grants contributed to a decrease in volunteer satisfaction with kindergarten activities.
3. Strategic choices which involved a change in funding raised several points to consider for similar future strategies.
 - (a) The amount given can be too much and stifle the spirit of self-help.
 - (b) The basis upon which funds are given should be according to where funds are needed most. It would appear that the actual basis in the examples studied was the philosophy popular with politicians at the time, that the two movements should be given equitable assistance.
 - (c) The allocation of funds is crucial. For the playcentre organisation, which is highly integrated, the giving of grants for specific purposes can affect the degree of participation, so important to the movement. Funds given for more general purposes:

- (i) decrease the chances of specialist sub-systems forming. Specialist sub-systems detract from the strength which arises from members being involved in diverse tasks.
 - (ii) allow the movement to be flexible in using the funds. For the kindergarten movement the tradition of giving funds for specific purposes has led to an increasing separation of the sub-systems which in turn has meant more formal communication and more rules to regulate behaviour, which in turn has lessened flexibility.
 - (d) The process for deciding and implementing strategies about funding should involve all parties. If the Government assumes that it has the power or right to make such decisions alone, or leaves consultation to a late stage, the voluntary organisation is likely to feel denigrated and mistrustful.
4. The benefits from the strategic choices came mostly to those already involved in the pre-school movements - to the parents and young children who were using the services, and to the staff and volunteers who provided and administered the services. No changes were made which helped many new people to avail themselves of playcentre and kindergarten education. That is, the partnerships' decisions did little to alter the picture of who gets to pre-school.
5. Each movement is constrained from delivering services which it was not designed to give but which changing social conditions may be demanding of it, or someone.
- (a) The playcentre movement is constrained by its identifying feature: by the amount of participation of parents in playcentre work and in the decision-making processes. It cannot function without considerable participation. This level of participation is higher than most other parent cooperative pre-schools movements in the world. Its high level of worker participation approaches the ideal advocated by organisational social scientists, and its level of parent involvement in children's early childhood education approaches the ideal being advocated by educationists (Bronfenbrenner, 1974).
 - (b) The kindergarten movement is constrained by one of its identifying features: by the standardization of its service. The rules and Regulations result in standardized functioning but allow little room for innovative changes.

The Future of New Zealand's Pre-school Organisations The four strategic choice processes analysed in Chapters 6 and 7 indicate that only marginal gains were made to the availability of pre-school places (via better accommodation and via less fund-raising pressures on families in need) and there were important gains in some rural areas where no pre-school education was available until accommodation was made possible. There were gains and losses of acceptability to the people already in the organisations, but the changes did little to make pre-school attendance more attractive to non-users.

One of the results of the inability of the two major pre-school movements to change to meet new social conditions is that there should be other forms of pre-school education as well. The support for alternative forms of early childhood education is growing. This is witnessed by the 120 people at the NZ/OECD Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, 1978, unanimously calling for funds for a wide range of services. The conditions which have changed and call for re-evaluation include:

1. Government is faced with different economic circumstances than existed during the years when I was doing the field work for this study. The present recession has encouraged the growth of innovative schemes which cost less money than kindergartens.
2. The changing role of women has led parents to demanding new forms of early childhood services. Playcentres and kindergartens are no longer sufficient; a greater variety of services is sought.
3. People involved in the early childhood field, including some playcentre members and kindergarten teachers, are questioning the legitimacy of the two organisations receiving the vast majority of public money set aside for early childhood education. They too are calling for diversification.
4. There are fewer pre-school aged children in New Zealand in 1980 than there were in 1975.

The organisation systems developed by alternative pre-school education should be just as fascinating as those already in existence. Two other types of early childhood service seek support most often:

- (a) Playgroups/drop-in centres/shoppers' creches
- (b) Child care - in centres or in families.

The demand comes from two groups of families who differ from pre-school users - from families who have pre pre-school aged children

and from young families where parents are in paid employment. It is possible that other services or modified services are desired, but few people have loudly voiced their interest in additional new types of service.

My analyses suggest that certain change-proposals will be more readily listened to than others. The changes which the State-kindergarten partnership is inclined towards are:

- changes which increase the number of kindergarten places (less appropriate in times of declining populations);
- changes which 'tidy' the whole movement; and
- changes which relieve pressure on the voluntary organisation's personnel.

Future changes acceptable to the playcentre organisation will be those which will not disrupt the parent co-operative nature of the movement.

Pre-school education is available at present to families who choose to use the services - many families who need early childhood care and education services are unable to use the services at present publicly-funded. Parents who need to use early childhood centres often require a longer period of care than playcentres or free kindergarten offer. They patronise child care centres and family day care; the former receives minimal Government support, and the latter none, unless they are coordinated by an organisation like Barnadoes. Is the 'cake' being fairly distributed?

I predict that playgroups will flourish increasingly in the future, while child care centres will continue to struggle. Playgroups are relatively cheap to run and they fit in with existing organisational patterns and ideologies. They may or may not affiliate with playcentres or free kindergartens, and the only rule they have to comply with is parents must stay with the children; and any venue can be used. The playcentre movement is encouraging playgroups so mothers start their training to help build up a pool of trained parents earlier (smaller families mean fewer years of involvement in playcentre). Growth in the number of child care centres is far more difficult and expensive to achieve. The Government, reflecting the division of opinion amongst the New Zealand general public about child care centres, is maintaining an ambivalent stance. Whilst there is agreement that children in care should receive quality care, they do not want to help young parents place children in care so they can go out to work. Two administrative committees have been set up

in recent years to examine Government-child care centre relations. One is charged with suggesting revisions to the Regulations, but these have not yet been finalised.

The two pre-school organisations are constrained from changing their service to providing longer hours of care. Although playcentre leaders support the call for improved child care facilities, they say that their parent co-operative cannot support more than a few working mothers without overtaxing the volunteers and contradicting their philosophy of playcentre being an extension of the home. Free kindergarten leaders have not been supportive of other groups trying to expand child care provision. They say mothers should be at home until children turn 5. Extended-hours kindergartens would have to alter their pattern of delivery and their programme, and lower the weekly roll. Thus the economic and social climate in New Zealand and the traditions of the two pre-school movements inhibit both from offering all day care, although the population decline may force a change of buildings - use onto kindergarten committees.

If the two pre-school movements choose to stay in their present niche, it may be best to leave them as they are, and develop further structures for child care services. However, improved co-ordination between the two pre-school movements and the emerging child care movement must accompany future developments. I am unsure that a new administrative structure at Government level is necessary, but I believe that all three movements should have the same Minister. But unifying portfolios and doing nothing else has few advantages according to the Centre for Education Research and Innovation (1977); they advocate some integrated or closely co-ordinated administrative structure in addition. There are many models of integrated childhood services around the world but I would not advocate importing any overseas model in toto.

Those in the field of early childhood care and education in New Zealand await with interest the outcome of the State Services Commission Working Party on Early Childhood Care and Education Administration deliberations. (The report is with the Minister at the time of writing). Whatever their recommendations, I would hope that the planning for the implementation will allow the fullest public participation in the decision-making processes. In the words of the Honorable Alan Hunt, Minister for Planning, Victoria, ".... public participation makes for better policies, better plans and a greater appreciation of the real needs and aspirations of a local community".

Public participation is one way of achieving some accountability. Levin (1974) believes that educationists often confuse the different meanings of accountability. The first meaning concerns the question 'How well is this institution/organisation performing?' and meets with difficulties when people cannot agree on objectives and/or priorities, nor on how to overcome deficiencies. The second meaning is concerned with cost-efficiency. The third meaning is political and is the one I wish to discuss in more detail here. It asks whether the needs of the different constituencies are being fulfilled. The fourth meaning questions the whole institution of schooling and doubts the value of using institutions for educating some or all of the population. The main problems with the third form of accountability are: to whom are educational institutions answerable, and for what reasons? Studies of power relationships show that those with more power are most likely to have their needs met. (Bendix, 1956; Caudhill 1958; Lipset, Trow and Coleman, 1972; Pettigrew, 1973). The two main involved in the pre-school 'to whom?' problem are the parents and the taxpayer (represented by Department of Education officials); the latter group usually having more power. Neither of the groups think that pre-school organisations should be answerable to one group only, and for good reason when each is also partial provider. There is considerable strength in the situation where parents, through their involvement in New Zealand pre-school voluntary organisations, are involved in the decision-making and in the evaluation of the results of the decisions; but the parents' contribution must be appreciated both in word and deed, not denigrated by Government officers if all parties are to benefit from the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Future Decision-making

A. For all Partners

1. One of the features which emerged from this study was that strategic choices in the mid-1970s did little to improve the availability of pre-school education to certain social groups. New policies in the late 1970s have resulted in more diverse services catering for a wider range of families. They include mobile kindergartens, Correspondence School pre-schools and groups receiving help from Community Pre-school Workers (paid by Government). However, families who choose child care centres as their form of early childhood care and education service do not benefit from this diversification unless they are designated as having a 'special need'. A new national structure may be necessary to attain re-allocation of resources into early childhood centres now under the Department of Social Welfare.
2. If recognition of child care centres involves material support from Government sources in a time of economic recession, the playcentre and kindergarten movements may have to sacrifice further improvements to their own service or conditions of work to help these early childhood groups.
3. The playcentre movement and the kindergarten movement each have unique characteristics which are important to the maintenance of their own systems. Actions taken to make both organisations more equitable often upset the interaction between the various parts within the organisations to little apparent advantage, and all partners need to resist policies predominantly motivated by the principle of equitability.
4. All partners in the field should value the diversity we have in New Zealand's early childhood services. What is the point of having alternative forms of pre-school education, if Government in particular tries to encourage them to become more similar?
5. The practice of one voluntary organisation expressing envy of what the other voluntary organisation has been given from Government funds is likely to encourage the Government partner to pursue policies based on the principle of equitability to make grants seem 'fair'. The Hill report encouraged strategic choice based on this principle and the outcomes, in some instances, have been quite damaging to the movements.

6. If the Government holds back from assisting one movement until both organisations can be given the same help, severe difficulties in maintaining itself can be experienced by the organisation in greatest need. Each organisation is likely to have needs that are best met in rather different ways.
7. Accountability for both organisations should be a balanced combination of leaders being answerable to their own members and to the Government partner, because members of pre-school organisations are tax-payers, volunteers and clients all at once.
8. Silence, or no complaints, does not necessarily mean that members are happy with strategic choices. It may mean that there are no perceived channels for expressing criticism. Both the Government partner and the kindergarten organisation give pre-school personnel fewer opportunities to express dissent than does the playcentre organisation. The former bodies need to investigate ways of improving communication between constituent parts, and between partners.
9. Some rivalry for clients between the two organisations is inevitable when what the pre-school families want primarily - children's programmes - are remarkably similar. Publicity extolling their own good features (and thereby implying a poorer performance by the rival) is used by both organisations to highlight the few differences in the programmes.

B. For Members of the State-Playcentre Partnership

1. The time is ripe for the playcentre movement to make explicit its choice between:
 - (a) keeping the distinctive characteristics of the movement which make it unique in the world for its amount or parental involvement, and accepting the accompanying 'elitist' label, and
 - (b) decreasing the level of parental involvement so that more children of parents who are unable to participate can attend.

I feel that the choice was made at the 1977 Federation conference to remain a parent co-operative pre-school movement which caters for families whose parents can participate, but this was not made clear to other groups involved early childhood education.

2. To keep parents participating in a variety of tasks and related decision-making, the level of integration should be preserved and specialisation of tasks avoided.

3. Funds granted to the playcentre organisation are most constructive if they are for general as opposed to specific purposes. ('Tied' grants lower the level of integration).
 4. Playcentre training personnel could give consideration to encouraging the altering the closing of the children's sessions to make them less stressful for the children, to make the programme more acceptable to parents and to make the programme more like a new entrants classroom in one small respect. Some form of large group activity may fit these criteria. The survey data and the observational material (reported in Chapters 3 and 4) suggests such a change may have several advantages.
 5. Ways and means for reducing the turnover of playcentre supervisors need to be investigated. I think the turnover in city centres is too rapid now that individual families spend fewer years at playcentre with their smaller families. Two suggestions are: Parents starting on the first part of the Training Manual before their first child begins at playcentre, and rewarding supervisors who stay for a term or two after their children have left playcentre.
 6. If Wellington playcentre training personnel were to cross-credit more sections of the playcentre training courses with other teaching courses, more mothers might take up supervising. A shorter playcentre course for former teachers would make these trainees feel happier and could mean that they would start supervising earlier. Conversely, if credit was given for playcentre certificates by other teaching courses that would encourage mothers with career aspirations to start up the ladder by doing playcentre supervising.
 7. Playcentre leaders should be conscious that members, once used to participating in decision-making activities, will not willingly implement decisions introduced authoritatively.
- C. For Members of the State-Kindergarten Partnership
1. If kindergarten leaders and departmental officials give consideration to revoking some of the existing rules and regulations, the kindergarten movement may improve its ability to be adaptive.
 2. Any further large help by the Government to the kindergarten movement is likely to severely dampen the voluntary efforts of parents to work for movement.
 3. Kindergarten leaders and departmental officials must consciously consider the effect any strategy or tactic they choose in the future has on parental involvement if they

wish to retain and increase parent participation. It must be remembered, however, that some parents cannot, or will not, participate in their children's formal early childhood education.

4. To increase the level of parent participation above the present level, I suggest trying some or all of the following tactics:
 - send out fuller minutes so that all members are well informed;
 - send out minutes with adequate time allowed for members not present at the meeting to discuss the issues raised;
 - do away with executive committees at local and association levels. The small number of decisions left to these volunteers does not warrant the existence of an executive;
 - introduce new types of parent education gatherings;
 - increase the opportunities for social interaction of members - give them a cup of tea during meetings and so on. It was the adult companionship which gave the most satisfaction.
5. Kindergarten leaders and departmental officials should give consideration to opening more kindergartens offering a longer session such as that offered to some children on the roll at the Helen Deem Centre in Dunedin. This way, other families may have their needs met.
6. Kindergarten leaders and departmental officials should give consideration to the plight of geographically mobile families wishing to use kindergartens. This group of families are ill-served by a 'first in, first served' waiting list policy.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Further research needs to be done on where the families who do not attend pre-school at present get some support in raising their children. Low SES families are clearly under-represented on pre-school rolls, and geographically mobile families are also missing out on pre-school education. Research and innovation is needed to find new forms of early childhood education which fit these families' needs.
2. There is a growing number of research projects on all aspects of early childhood care and education in New Zealand, but there is a pressing need for far more knowledge about New Zealand children's development, and about the effects of both children's programmes and parent education programmes on the

recipients.

3. Some action research on what aspects of kindergarten and playcentre functioning make Polynesian families uncomfortable coming to these centres is needed to either increase the usage by and satisfaction of these young families, or help Pakehas accept that Polynesian-style pre-schools are fine.

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